

Top choices for elegant open-air dining in the wake of SARS.

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A permanent exhibition about the Imperial City retraces the usually neglected role of the "outer" inner city.

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"I never imagined the color under water was so vivid."

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Quarantine Over — It's Official!

The World Health Organization on Tuesday removed Beijing from its list of SARS-infected areas and lifted its travel advisory against the city, saying the risk for travelers to Beijing "is now minimal," and calling the development a "milestone" in the fight against SARS around the world.

The decision took effect immediately, Shigeru Omi, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, announced at a joint WHO-Ministry of Health press conference.

"WHO concluded that the risk to travelers to Beijing is now minimal," he said.

Omi also announced that Beijing was removed from the list of areas with recent local transmission, "because WHO concluded that the chain of human-to-human transmission in Beijing has been broken."

"Today's development is a milestone for the fight against SARS, not only in China but also the world, because from today WHO has no more advisories against anywhere around the world," he said.

However the WHO official called for continued vigilance against the disease in spite of the excellent achievements. "Surveillance has to be maintained for at least one year," he said.

Beijing had recorded a total of 2,521 cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome and 191 deaths as of Monday, and reported no new SARS cases for consecutive 13 days. The Chinese mainland had reported a total of 5,326 SARS cases and 347 deaths as of Monday.

The WHO travel advisory against non-essential travel to the Chinese capital was issued on April 23. (Xinhua)



Medical staff at Anzhen Hospital celebrate Beijing's removal from WHO's list of SARS-infected areas. Xinhua Photo

Significant Progress Made in SARS Research

By Lily Li

Vice-Minister of Science and Technology Li Xueyong said at a press conference on Wednesday that China has made great progress in anti-SARS research in the past two months.

A total of 120 million yuan has been put towards 95 projects, involving 3,000 top scientists, since the establishment of the national anti-SARS command team on April 25, leading to substantial achievements in SARS diagnosis and treatment, he added.

According to Li, also the deputy leader of the science and technology wing of that team, "Therapy that combines traditional Chinese and Western medicines has been tangibly effective, and natural protective products and other equipment helped reduce infections among doctors and nurses."

While SARS vaccines, treat-

ment drugs and diagnostic kits have yet to be fully developed, progress towards those goals has been made, he said. "We have made great progress in research on primate infection models. The laboratory preparations for two types of inactivated vaccines have been completed and testing of those vaccines on primates is underway. Some medicines suitable for intellectual property right application have been listed and diagnostic kits and genetic chips are being clinically evaluated," Li continued.

He also praised the role of international cooperation in anti-SARS research. According to the Vice Minister, however, three key tasks remain – the further study of SARS transmission patterns and epidemiological prevention, the development of vaccines and anti-viral drugs and the creation of diagnostic kits and reagents.



Staff from the Xi'an Cultural Relics and Gardens Bureau unpack the returned grey pottery figures Wednesday.

Photo by Aily

Stolen Pottery Figures Returned to Xi'an

By Chen Ying

A set of six 2,000-year-old grey pottery figures, smuggled out of the country and slated for auction at Sotheby's New York in March last year, were returned to Xi'an yesterday, from where they were stolen two years ago.

Staff from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Public Security and local authorities from Shaanxi attended the handover ceremony for the Western Han Dynasty (206BC-25) relics at Beijing Capital International Airport noon Wednesday.

What has been lost

More than one million Chinese cultural relics have been displayed in more than 200 museums in 47 countries, according to unofficial statistics. It is estimated that several million such artifacts have been collected around the world.

Many were taken abroad during the past 150 years. Like Greece and Egypt, China continues to seek the return of stolen treasures. The British Museum has collected more than 30,000 Chinese artifacts.

But 19 international museums and institutions issued a declaration at the end of last year saying it would be improper to return ancient artworks to their countries of origin.

Thanks to the cooperation between international governments or the efforts of other parties, some rare articles have come back to China recently.

June 2003, six grey pottery figures of the Western Han Dynasty were returned to China from the US.

June 2002, 14 tons of illegally removed fossils were returned from the US.

August 2001, the Five Dynasties Period Wang Chuzhi marble tomb panel was returned to China from the US.

Smuggling ring

The story begins in April 2001, when Xi'an police smashed a smuggling ring, which had stolen cultural relics from the Western Han Dynasty tomb of Queen Dou. Acting on information provided by those arrested, police recovered more than thirty articles in the following months.

During the course of their investigation, police learned that eight grey pottery figures had been removed from the tomb, two of which were recovered and sent to a local museum. Then on March 18, 2002, Liu Yongzheng, of the Xi'an Cultural Relics and Gardens Bureau, discovered that the six others were to be auctioned at Sotheby's, New York at 10 am on March 20.

"Our only thought was to prevent the auction taking place, no matter how difficult that might be," Liu told *Beijing Today*. The local bureau faxed an urgent report to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage the same day.

The Chinese embassy in Washington received a fax from Interpol's China Bureau on the morning of March 19, asking the embassy to take immediate action to prevent the auction taking place.

Time running out

Approximately two hours later, the embassy sent a fax to the US Customs Service in Washington and New York, informing them about the impending auction of the stolen artifacts. Meanwhile, the embassy's police affairs liaison officer Wang Qing (a pseudonym) boarded a train for New York.

With only one hour before the pottery figures, labeled lot No. 32, were due to go under the hammer, Wang handed Sotheby's legal affairs director a copy of the embassy's official note and asked that the proceedings be halted.

But in the absences of any documents proving the claim that

the artifacts were stolen, the director refused.

Wang then asked him if he could explain why the figures were not clothed and were missing their upper limbs, promising that further evidence that the grey pottery figures belonged to China would be forthcoming if he could do so, but the director was unable to answer.

Wang then explained that the figures were funerary objects, and would have been buried dressed in fine silks or other fabrics, which would have decayed over the centuries, while their arms would have been made of wood and held various symbolic items. "The director hesitated after I explained the reason."

In the conversation that followed, Wang emphasized that US and China had a duty to protect each other's cultural heritage, since both were signatories of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. He also said that the Chinese government would consider publicizing the facts about the case if Sotheby's went ahead with the auction after having been informed by the embassy that the figures were stolen.

There was a long silence, says Wang, and then the director said he would cancel the auctioning of lot No. 32. When Wang looked at his watch, there was just 20 minutes to spare.

Satisfactory result

In the following 15 months, the Chinese side provided all the necessary documents to prove the origin of the grey pottery figures to the US Customs Service.

With the completion of all the legal processes, a ceremony was held at the Chinese Consulate General in New York Tuesday last week.

Special agent in charge of the Department of Home Security,

Martin Ficke, described the return of the ancient Chinese cultural relics as "yet another example of what cooperative law enforcement can produce."

Mission for the future

With abundant cultural heritage resources, Shaanxi Province is constantly targeted by thieves and smugglers. Xiang De, associate president of Xi'an Cultural Relics and Gardens Administration Bureau, told *Beijing Today* Wednesday that protecting cultural heritage was the duty not only of the relevant administrations, but of all levels of government and society.

"China is so rich in cultural heritage. It is far from enough only to depend on our power to protect those valuable articles," Xiang emphasized that it is essential to establish a public cultural heritage protection network and strengthen cultural heritage administrations' law enforcement rights.

"Illicit export and smuggling had been controlled before the middle of the 1980s. But such illegal actions have arisen again and became rampant since then," says Xie Chensheng, a Beijing-based cultural heritage expert.

In fact many individuals have become involved in the area of protection. A non-government organization, China's Lost Cultural Relics Recovery Program, founded last year, holds regular activities calling on the public to take a more active role in protecting China's cultural heritage.

In May 2000, Beijing's Poly Art Museum spent HK \$30 million to purchase three bronzes taken from Yuanmingyuan at an auction in Hong Kong.

"Getting those artifacts back will be more economical through international governmental cooperation," said a spokesman from the Chinese embassy in the US.

(See "Readers & Leaders" on Page 6)

EDITOR: LI XIN DESIGNER: LI SHI

China Not Behind

By Lily Li

At the SARS Scientific Progress Report press conference held Wednesday morning in Beijing, Huang Peitang, vice dean of the Military Academy of Sciences, responded to a question from a reporter from Hong Kong-based newspaper *Tu Kung Pao* as to whether China is behind other countries in terms of SARS research, by saying absolutely not.

"We should have done better and

faster research in some cases, and because of many existent problems, we are not at the top of the field in some respects. We will overcome these problems in future research," he said.

"Even though we are not in the lead in some aspects, it does not mean our whole group has been defeated or is behind," Huang added. He also noted that the SARS epidemic in China was brought under control in

only two months following the establishment of the national anti-SARS command team, even under the unfavorable conditions of the country's size and the poor state of equipment in many areas.

According to Chen Zhu, vice dean of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, although China had the most SARS patients of any country in the world, its average death rate of 6.7 percent was under the global average of

9.3 percent among the 8,000-some patients that contracted the disease. "From this perspective, we won the overall battle," he said.

Chen added that key directions for work in continued SARS research efforts are starting up a basic national research project on SARS prevention and treatment, strengthening research security management, referring to foreign experience and engaging in international cooperation.

Not Guilty!

New SARS research exonerates civet cats

By Xiao Rong

Scientists from China Agricultural University announced last Thursday they had found no evidence linking civet cats to the SARS virus.

Researchers from the university found no SARS virus in any of the 732 specimens of 65 kinds of wild and domestically bred animals collected from seven provinces and regions across the country.

On April 18, the university launched a project to find if there was a connection between the SARS virus and animals. Using the internationally-accepted gene detection method called RT-PCR technology, scientists were not able to detect the SARS virus in 76 samples of wild and bred civet cats, though other forms of the coronavirus were detected in some civet cats and other wild animals.

On May 23, a joint research team in Hong Kong and Shenzhen claimed to have traced the SARS coronavirus to a SARS-like virus found in civet cats.

Sequencing of three strains of the SARS-like viruses isolated from six civet cats and a raccoon were found to be 99 percent identical to the human SARS virus, according to the joint research.

Following the announcement, countless civet cats in China, especially those bred for human consumption, have been caged or killed over fears that they might transmit the SARS-like virus to humans, causing great economic loss for China's 60,000 civet cat breeders.

"After some consideration, we decided to announce our results, with the aim of preventing the slaughter of civet cats," said Sun Qixin, vice president of China Agriculture University, who is in charge of the project.

When asked to comment on the university's findings, Liu Xiaoli, vice director of the Shenzhen Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which cooperated with Hong Kong University in conducting the earlier research, stressed that it was hard to assess because of the different technologies both sides had used.

"The fact that they haven't found a SARS-like virus in civet cats doesn't mean that there is no such virus in the animals. And by the same token, our earlier finding that there are SARS-like viruses in civet cats doesn't show it is a SARS virus. Our work has just begun in tracing the origin of SARS," said Liu.

Sun echoed that the research is only an interim result that needs further investigation.

"After Shenzhen and Hong Kong announced their results, we tested civet cats in a wider range of scopes, including human-bred ones in epidemic areas like Beijing and Shanxi. But we found no SARS virus," he continued.

Sun emphasized that the team was simply announcing their current findings, not questioning the results of other institutions.

"We will undertake further work to trace which kind of wild animals might be connected with the SARS virus and we want to share our samples with the Shenzhen-Hong Kong joint research team to facilitate further cooperation," said Sun.

Both Sun Qixin and Liu Xiaoli agreed that until the origins of the SARS virus were discovered, people should treat wild animals like civet cats in a sensible manner, rather than needlessly killing or capturing them.



It's apricot season!

Xinhua Photo

Recovery on Horizon for Local Tourism Industry

By Zhao Hongyi

The Beijing Municipal Tourism Administration has launched a new wave of marketing efforts worldwide with the intention of minimizing the losses to the city's tourism industry this year following the damaging SARS epidemic. However, tourist flow is not expected to return to former levels until autumn and it is too early to predict overall industry performance for the year.

Encouraged by the World Health Organization's WHO lifting of its travel advisory for Beijing and its removal of the city from its list of SARS infection areas on Tuesday, Yu Changjiang, director general of the tourism administration, told media that his organization is making great efforts to lure tourists both Chinese and foreign.

Among the measures being taken, according to Yu, are the launch of new tour packages, the invitation of overseas business partners to a tourism fair scheduled for next month in Beijing, the start of ad campaigns around the world, the implementation of reward programs to invite 100 overseas travel agencies to visit the city and sign contracts, and the holding of

the annual Beijing International Cultural Tourism Festival.

Most parks and scenic spots in Beijing have cut their ticket prices in half and some domestic travel agencies, such as China Travel Service, are extending special offers for customers from the US and Canada.

Local restaurants and hotels have seen increasing numbers of customers this month, perhaps due in part to lower prices, as some luxury hotels such as the Great Wall Sheraton are offering up to 50 percent discounts.

Both officials and businesspeople admit that sanitation and healthy individual behavior are two critical points that must be heeded if tourism is to recover.

"We didn't expect the WHO to remove Beijing from its SARS list and lift its travel warning simultaneously," said Wen Ziji, deputy director general of the tourism administration.

He added, "We hope the number of tourists in October and November will be around the same as last year," but made no mention of tourism revenues for the whole year. In 2002, Beijing received 3.1 million overseas tourists and 78 million domestic travelers.

Reform of Income Tax System Urged

By Lily Li

Calls to raise the personal income tax threshold were bolstered last week when the Financial Sciences Research Institute under the Ministry of Finance submitted a proposal to the State Council, pressing the government to reform the country's existing personal income tax system so as to address the widening gap between the rich and poor.

The proposal suggests reducing the tax rate for people earning monthly incomes of 3,000 yuan to 5,000 yuan, moderately increasing the income tax threshold and imposing a tax on high-end houses.

Bai Jingming, an institute researcher who oversaw the drafting of the proposal, said the 22-year-old personal income tax base line of 800 yuan is no longer suitable, as real income levels have increased significantly from the

100 yuan per month average of 1981.

He suggested the bottom line be raised to 1,200 yuan per month nationwide.

The insufficient purchasing power of medium-income and low-income groups has weakened the role of domestic demand as a crucial propeller of economic growth, he added.

Professor Qian Cheng, a researcher in the Taxation Research Institute under the State Administration of Taxation, told *Beijing Today* that the proposal is aimed at reminding the government of the urgent need for personal income tax system reform, a process effectively stopped by the outbreak of SARS.

In March, members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in the First Session of the 10th CPPCC National Committee suggested efforts be made to establish a progressive taxation system conforming to China's conditions and to launch a nationwide publicity campaign on citizens' obligation to pay taxes.

Air Ticket Prices Hearing Expected Next Month

By Lily Li

The first national hearing on air ticket pricing, scheduled to be held in Beijing on April 24, was delayed by the outbreak of SARS and is expected to be held in July, a spokesman for the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) told the *Beijing Morning Post* on Monday.

At the hearing, 15 delegates, made up of two representatives of consumer groups, seven ordinary citizens, four executives from airlines and two experts, will discuss plans to reform the CAAC's current transportation pricing policies. The key point will be how to set up a system of variable air ticket pricing able to change in response to factors such as season, time, passenger numbers and flight types.

"Complete government control of ticket pricing was brought to an end last April, as a result of which air carriers have been offering discount tickets. However, the CAAC has never come public with its take on discount tickets, so this hearing, although late, can be seen as an opportunity for the administration to give its appraisal of current discount methods," said Gao Yuan, an airline analyst at *People's Daily*.

Loan Control Could Shake Up Real Estate Industry

By Lily Li

Real estate developers are feeling the heat since the People's Bank of China (PBOC) issued a circular on June 13 that called for the tightening of control of real estate loans.

Unlike excited prospective homebuyers, local developers are very concerned about the ramifications of the new policy.

Pan Shiyi, chairman of the board of SOHO (China) called the notice the most severe blow dealt to the real estate industry in ten years and Ren Zhiqiang, CEO of Huayuan Real Estate Development Co., said it could send real estate development into a recession. He explained that because the new loan policy restricts funds from going towards some housing construction and land purchases, it would reduce developers' monetary resources. "Around 50 percent of all real estate companies will face bankruptcy and 70 percent of development projects will have to stop," Ren added.

By effectively increasing capital requirements for construction projects, the new circular could spell the end for weaker companies. According to Ren, only 10 percent of the 30,000 real estate development firms nationwide can meet the new loan standards. He said, "It will surely hurt most companies, especially those without enough funds, and result in a reshuffling of the real estate industry."

Not all developers are as pessimistic. Wang Guangfa, CEO of Beijing Fazheng Group, said the policy should act as a force of natural selection within the industry and push the whole market towards greater standardization and professionalism. "Real estate companies in Shenzhen already practice some aspects of this policy, such as only selling homes in completed buildings, which makes the industry there better developed than here in Beijing," he added.

"The central bank has no intention of harming the real estate industry or stopping loans," a spokesman from monetary policy section of the PBOC said.

Dai Genyou, director of the monetary policy section of the PBOC told the *Financial Times* last Wednesday that the bank is focusing on and looking for solutions to problems with real estate loans and bubbles in the industry. "This circular has a lot of accompanying rules and will rely on the commercial banks to improve it in implementation," he said.

Liu Xiangrong, vice chairman of the Jiaodian Real Estate Website, told *Beijing Today* that the central bank should have conducted open hearings before making such an important policy that affects the entire real estate industry.

The circular has yet to be put into effect, and Dai admitted it will take some time to move the policy into practice, adding housing sold before the release of the circular does not need to conform to the new requirements.

Property Management Under New Rules

By Xiao Rong

Wang Bingchun, vice manager of Beijing's Antaixin Property Management Co., is very happy about last Friday's announcement by the Ministry of Construction of the release of China's first national property management regulation. "We have been looking forward to a regulation like this for years," he said.

According to Wang, "The property management market in China used to be a real mess, but the new regulation should greatly help improve the situation by clarifying the rights and obligations of house owners and property management companies."

His firm, which received its necessary qualification certification this March, is one of the over 20,000 property management firms nationwide, many of which have opened in just the past few years as the real estate market boomed in this country.

The regulation, the first of its kind in China, has been in the works since 1999. The over-4,000 suggestions received during a campaign to solicit public opinion conducted since last October were taken into account in the drafting of the final document. It is due to go into effect on September 1.

"The issued version has many changes from previous drafts, all of which are targeted at solving problems in property management practices," said Mao Shoulong, a professor in the Department of Administrative Management of Renmin University.

In Mao's opinion, the new regulation will provide a just and open legal mechanism to protect the interests of both house owners and property management companies, though there are still important loopholes that need to be resolved.

Two key problems in property management practices that have yet to be dealt with are the legal status of house owners and their property rights, Mao added.

"House owner committees, as self-governing organizations, do not have the status of legal persons, which puts them at a disadvantage in disputes with property management companies. And the lack of property rights law in China is another obstacle in the way to truly protecting the interests of house owners," he said.

A State Development and Reform Commission investigation conducted last year about property management disputes showed an increase in complaints about illegal management practices nationwide, especially in Beijing, where 560 cases were settled in 2002.

According to Mao, most disputes between house owners and property management companies are a result of house owners' lack of property rights.

"Because it was drawn up by the administrative department of this industry, the regulation is more or less partial on the side of property management companies instead of house owners," he stressed.

However, both he and Wang Bingchun believe this regulation should prove to be effective in supervising property management services, on the condition that it is strictly enforced.

Time Warner Invests in Shanghai Cinema



By Shan Jinliang

US entertainment conglomerate Time Warner confirmed Wednesday that it has become the second shareholder in Shanghai Paradise Cinema City as its first step to share profits in China's cinema industry.

Timer Warner is the first of the US top eight film companies including Columbia Pictures that began to share profits in China's film market, which generates US \$100 million every year.

Paradise Cinema City is one of the 57 cinemas owned by China's box office leader, Shanghai Paradise Cinema Line. The two sides said the joint venture cinema will open on July 12, screen-

ing the long-awaited *Matrix 2*.

Hong Kong's Golden Harvest Film Company opened Golden Cinema Haixing in Shanghai in September 1997, representing the first overseas capital to invest in China's cinema sector. It was followed by Hong Kong Studio City Cinema, which opened cinemas in Wuhan, Chongqing and Shanghai from 1997.

US-based Kodak also invested in a cinema two years ago, in the same busy Xujiahui Commercial District as Paradise Cinema City.

With foreign capital forbidden from investing directly in the film industry, Time Warner's strategy is to enter the cinema industry first

and wait for the policy on film investment to be relaxed, according to Wu Heqiong, a senior official of Shanghai Lianhe Cinema Line. After negotiations lasting one-and-a-half-years, Time Warner established an exclusive strategic partnership with Paradise Cinema Line this March.

"The annual revenues of Time Warner is \$20 billion," said Xie Baoxin, general manager of Paradise Group, mother company of Paradise Cinema Line, "while the investment on the cinema line was only around \$2 million, which reflects its ambition to see a sound film market develop in China."

Xie said Time Warner has begun training the staff of the cinema,

and the two sides have started their national expansion to build more joint venture cinemas. The second cinema in Shanghai's northwest will soon open, he added.

Shanghai Morning Post said on June 18 that Time Warner's entry to the industry could enable it to provide films directly to the cinemas, and it was also the biggest difference and advantage over other foreign capital.

Shanghai Cinema City deputy general manager Wang Jiayan said, "Other local cinemas are not afraid of Time Warner's shareholding in Paradise Cinema City as the foreign film import channel remains unchanged."

Wholesalers Challenge Carrefour

By Shan Jinliang

After a three-and-a-half hour negotiation with supermarket giant Carrefour, Shanghai Roasted Seeds Association announce it had failed in its attempt to get Carrefour to cut channel charges last Friday.

It is the first time a group of suppliers has united to fight against such charges, which include a French and Chinese festival store celebration fee, new product fee, service fee and unconditional return fee.

The association of 11 companies claimed that the channel charges are higher than their profits, and said if Carrefour refused to negotiate, all the companies would stop supplying its 39 chain stores around China.

The association's 11-point request included a call for all charges to be cut by half, an end to the practice of holding back goods revenues and the abolition of store facelift fees.

High charges

Association director Yin Wenming, who is also chairman of Shanghai Sanming Food Corporation, told the *Economic Observer* Monday, "Even if you are No. 1 in the field, they could coerce you to accept (the charges) by replacing you with the No. 2 or No. 3 players."

—Yin Wenming

He said the high supermarket channel fee is the combined result of the supermarkets and the suppliers, a few suppliers would enhance the channel to set up a threshold to other counterparts to ensure their monopolized profits, which greatly raises the charges standard.

Divide and conquer

In its response to the association's claims, Carrefour's public relations department announced on June 18 that it is actively handling the affair, and that the list of charges the association claimed were imposed was inaccurate and that most of the suppliers are making profits from the Carrefour stores.

It added that Carrefour would discuss the issue with

individual companies in an open, commercial way since it signs different contracts with different suppliers.

Association secretary general Chen Enguo described the announcement as a trick to split the union, adding that the 11 member companies had signed an agreement not to sign contracts individually with Carrefour.

Not a single case

A food supplier representative surnamed Wei told *Beijing Today* that the high channel fees are widely adopted in several supermarkets in Beijing, such as Japan's Ito Yokado, New World, Jingkelong and Chaoshifa, but Carrefour's are the highest.

Industry insiders said the profit model for the international shopping malls fall into two categories: the Carrefour model and the Wal-Mart model. The Carrefour model charges high back goods revenues and consultancy fees to make profits, which Wei says could contribute one third or even a half of its overall profits.

A report by US consultancy company Merrill Lynch which shows all the foreign supermarkets and shopping malls, except Carrefour, are losing money in China, including the world No. 1 retailer Wal-Mart, supports Wei's claim.

He said the high supermarket channel fee is the combined result of the supermarkets and the suppliers, a few suppliers would enhance the channel to set up a threshold to other counterparts to ensure their monopolized profits, which greatly raises the charges standard.

On June 18, representatives of eight other Shanghai associations paid a visit to the Roasted Seeds Association in a show of support, and a spokesperson for the soybean industry association said they are considering taking a similar action.

One day later, Carrefour China invited the Roasted Seeds Association to open a third round of talks, but most analysts say it is unlikely that Carrefour will offer a compromise.



Matiz

QQ

By Shan Jinliang

Mini-car dark horse Chery, a joint venture with China's largest automaker Shanghai Auto Industrial Corporation (SAIC) is the subject of an investigation by world No. 1 automaker General Motors over alleged design patent infringement.

Senior managers of General Motors allege that the design of the Anhui-based Chery's QQ copies plagiarized the design of its Matiz, which was developed by South Korean Daewoo, acquired by General Motors in 2001. General Motors plans to start selling a local version of Matiz, called Chevrolet Spark, in China later this year.

QQ questioned

When the cutely designed, under 50,000 yuan QQ appeared on the market in May, it quickly won popularity. Several thousand have been ordered to date.

Chery told the press on Tuesday the company has not received official notice of a lawsuit from General Motors, and noted that some of the world leading auto patents had been consulted during the design process and that 24 patents have been applied for. The outside appearance of the QQ had been found to resemble that of the Matiz by domestic

Chery Faces Patent Investigation

The investigation by General Motors into Chery is the latest in a series of actions by foreign automakers against Chinese manufacturers. Japanese automaker Toyota last month launched proceedings against China's only private car company Geely for allegedly plagiarizing its trademark and product design, and Tianjin-based Gangtong Motors was sued by Honda last September.

media and industry analysts.

Chery maintains it is normal for young and small car companies to learn design plans from big companies, but such "learning" could not be listed as plagiarizing. An auto analyst surnamed Zhang told *Beijing Today* that a few leading Japanese and South Korean automakers grew up by learning designs from US and Europe brands.

Beat Chery, beat Volkswagen?

QQ and Chevrolet Spark are targeted at the same group of buyers, but the Spark's price would be as high as 90,000 yuan, because it contained a number of imported parts.

Zhang said with such price gap, General Motors is unlikely to make large sales and big profits, and that General Motors hopes to beat Chery and then Germany's Volkswagen, SAIC's major partner in China. Volkswagen overtook General Motors with a 40 percent market share in China since it began to establish a joint venture with SAIC in 1985.

Hard nut to crack

Since SAIC, mother company of Chery, is also a partner of General Motors, the US company is unlikely to sue Chery, said Zhang, so it hopes SAIC will end its alliance with Chery.



Photo by Wei Yizhi

Business Park Seeks High-tech Tenants

By Tony Shaw

Traditionally one of the city's poorest districts, Fengtai is seeking a share of Beijing's foreign investment pie with a plan to attract the headquarters of top international high-tech companies by opening an Advanced Business Park in Fengtai Science Park, a branch of Zhongguancun Science Park last week.

Located by the South West Fourth Ring Road, the 110 hectare business park is invested with 4.5 billion yuan by the British Dauphin International Group and Fengtai Science Park. Fifteen high-tech companies have been granted the rights to name headquarter office buildings.

The first phase of the park is scheduled to be completed by October, and will include the independent headquarter buildings and a parking apron.

Currently, the new central business district (centered around Dabeiyao), Haidian Science Park (Zhongguancun) and the Beijing Development Area (in Daxing District) are Beijing's main areas to host international companies. According to a spokesperson for Fengtai Science Park, these different areas have different focuses: the CBD aims at attracting commercial companies, Haidian Science Park hi-tech companies and Beijing Development Area is a production base for international companies.

Reasons for Withdrawal of Insurance Offices Clarified

By Tony Shaw

China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC) issued a report Tuesday on the withdrawal of overseas insurance representative offices in China.

According to the insurance watchdog's report, 57 overseas insurance organizations withdrew their 79 representative offices in China from November 1998 to late May 2003, while 78 representative offices have been approved from November 1998 to June 20. A total of 190 representative offices from 120 foreign insurance companies have been established in China by the end of this May, the report added.

The report lists five causes behind the withdrawal of

these representatives. Fifteen of them left the Chinese market to fulfill the global strategy adjustment of their parent companies after determining that their products were not suited to the market, and 26 were withdrawn after their mother companies established business branches in China.

It also said 23 representative offices had to be dismissed because their mother companies had been merged, acquired or bankrupted, such as US Reinsurance, which was acquired by Munich Reinsurance. Six of them, such as Jardine Lloyd Thompson were closed by the CIRC because they breached the relevant rules by doing illegal business in China rather than just working as a liaison and in-

formation-collecting center.

"Due to various reasons, the large-scale withdrawal does not suggest foreign insurance branches are not performing well," said Du Hongmei, director of International Cooperation Division, CIRC on Tuesday.

As a standard to show the foreign insurance performance, all the 15 foreign insurance companies in China, both wholly owned and jointly established with Chinese partners, are all running smoothly, Du said, although some foreign life insurance companies might not be making profits now as they have to focus on long-term interests. She added, almost all the world top insurance companies have established branches in China.

Cross-Straits Card to Facilitate Trade

By Tony Shaw

Shanghai Commercial Bank revealed on People.com Wednesday that it will issue a credit card for Taiwan business people, which can be used at the around 10,000 membership stores in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

With no direct post, freight or business exchanges permitted across the Taiwan Straits, cash transactions have to be done via Hong Kong for the over 300,000 Taiwan business people working in or visiting the mainland, creating an unnecessary barrier for

cross-Straits trading.

With the new card, business people who often travel across the Straits can enjoy discount rates at participating stores. The bank said details of the plan will be announced at a meeting with participants from the three regions this August.



Photos by Bqb

Asia Meeting Offers Some Reality, More Dreams

Phnom Penh, June 22 (Reuters) - The dream of a pan-Asian organization able to draw on the power of many rather than leaving individual nations to struggle alone is becoming reality, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said.

Speaking at the end of the second meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Thak-

sin dismissed critics and held up the formal launch of a \$1 billion Asian Bond Fund as proof of the success of his initiative.

“Last year, the ACD concept might have seemed like a far-fetched dream for some. But now that we have got the chemistry right the ACD is not only a dream-come-true but will be a driving force for Asia to move

forward and to move forward faster,” he told the foreign ministers of 18 participating countries from Qatar to Indonesia.

The ACD still appears unsure of what it is doing and what it will achieve. “This is still a young process,” Thai Foreign Ministry spokesman Sihasak Phuangketkean told reporters.

But foreign ministers from

such major regional powers as China, Japan and South Korea dropped in to take part. China offered to play host to next year's ACD session. For the region's largest country to show an interest gives it more credibility.

Requests to join the ACD have come from Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman and Sri Lanka, which will expand the membership from 18 to 22.

Supporters say the launch of the \$1 billion Asian Bond Fund is evidence it can yield results, and India's interest in doubling that underscores its attraction. Critics say these sums are just a drop in the ocean from Asian countries that hold about two-thirds, or \$1.3 trillion of the world's foreign reserves. They charge that the ACD is little more than another talking shop.

(Jane Macartney)

At Thailand's initiative, Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) was launched in Thailand on 18-19 June 2002.

Participants at the inauguration of the ACD consist of 17 ministers from Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, Vietnam and Thailand. Myanmar participated later as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman and Sri Lanka are expected to be members at the ACD's next meeting, provisionally scheduled to be hosted in China.

China plays positive role in Asian cooperation

The Asia Cooperation Dialogue is derived from the ASEAN foreign ministers dialogue, which became a dialogue between the ASEAN members, China, Japan and South Korea in the 1990s.

China holds an active attitude towards and is playing an increasingly important role in economic cooperation in Asia, particularly after the Asian Financial crisis. Examples include the \$1 billion East Asian currency swap fund established in 1999 and the \$1 billion Bond Fund established this time.

China expresses satisfaction with the progress

achieved so far in the ACD, which covers topics of agriculture, energy security, poverty alleviation, transportation, bio-tech, e-commerce, taxation, development of small and medium enterprises, info-tech, energy resources, science and technology, tourism, HR resources, environmental protection and education, legal framework and financial cooperation.

— Jiang Yuechun, director, Economic Study Office, Institute of International Studies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Online Ads Take Off, Again

Mainstream marketers hiking Internet ad spending

After tumbling 18 percent in 2002, online ad revenues are expected to rise 12 percent this year, to around \$6.6 billion, as traditional big advertisers such as McDonald's start opening their wallets.

While online advertising accounts for just four percent of overall US ad revenues, the steady increase in spending by marketing giants is helping Internet publishers flourish, according to researcher Nielsen/NetRatings. In April, Yahoo, DoubleClick and New York Times Digital reported better-than-expected earnings.

After dot-com ad money dried up two years ago, online publishers scrambled to cater to traditional advertisers, offering zippier technology, dedicated ad teams, and better tools for measuring results. MSN, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Times* now offer their opening screens to single advertisers, mimicking full-page spreads in newspapers.

Lower ad prices, which fell 60 percent in 2001 and 2002, also are helping to fuel the frenzy. And the placement of ads near Internet search results has exploded on Google, MSN, and Yahoo. Paid search is expected to make up 33 percent of online ad revenue this year, up from seven percent in 2001.

The clincher for many traditional advertisers is simply that the people they want to reach are spending more leisure time online. Long-time Net surfers spend 10 hours a week watching TV — 36 percent less than someone who isn't online, according to The UCLA Internet Report released in January. And on average those with Net access spend 11.1 hours each week online, up from 9.4 hours in 2000.

Still, connecting with cyber customers involves learning as much about culture as it does about click-throughs. In a two-month test last winter, GM tracked users on the non-automotive sections of Yahoo and ESPN. It turned out that while ESPN surfers clicked on the car ads, the Yahoo crowd avoided them. “For whatever reason, within the confines of the Yahoo walls, people weren't responding,” says Stacey Flynn, media director at GM's ad agency Zentropy Partners. These new online markets, while full of promise, still maintain their share of mystery.

(Heather Green in New York and Pallavi Gogoi in Chicago)

Analyst's Take:

The Internet is sharing the ad market with traditional media carriers like publications, radio and TV, but has unique advantages, such as larger space for ads, higher effectiveness and more precisely-targeted customers.

If we look back through the years, we can find online ads recovered and stimulated the dying traditional ad market where people are fed up with the commercials in print and TV programs. The competition has led to a win-win result for Internet and traditional media.

China has 59 million Internet users. In 2002, online ad revenue reached 500 million yuan, a 26 percent increase from 2001.

This figure is accompanied by 90.3 billion yuan (approximately \$10.9 billion) overall ad market revenues in the country, an increase of 10.8 billion on a yearly basis. This makes China the tenth largest ad market, equaling the market scale of the UK and Germany. The figure is expected to increase by 30 percent annually in coming years.

Aside from online ads and SMS - short message services - wireless connection and online searching will clearly become the new sources of profits for commercial websites in China.

— Zhang Lizheng, chief marketing officer, Sina.com



Youngsters gather at a Starbucks outlet in Beijing. Starbucks is attracting Chinese youth as a symbol of US culture and putting greater emphasis on China as an important potential market.

Photo by Photocom

Trouble Brewing for Starbucks in Japan

Tokyo, June 11 (Bloomberg) - It happens with increasing frequency here in Tokyo. You're invited for a coffee at the local Starbucks, only to hang up the telephone and cry: “Oh no, which one?”

Starbucks's circular, green-and-black logo has become ubiquitous in Japan, the site of its biggest expansion outside the US. On top of the 466 stores in Japan now, Starbucks Coffee Japan will add 70 to 75 this year.

Here's the real story, though. It's opening a third fewer stores than the 108 outlets opened in the year ended March 31. Starbucks Japan's stock has lost two-thirds of its value over the past 12 months.

Like McDonald's before it, Starbucks is cannibalizing its own success with too many stores. It doesn't help that US competitor Tully's Coffee and local java shops are encroaching on its sales. The issue worrying investors is over saturation.

That too many coffee shops are vying for too few customers in Japan is a blow to Seattle-based Starbucks; it hoped overseas sales would offset any cooling of its US business. Will Starbucks' expansion plans suffer similar disappointments throughout Asia, where Starbucks has become one of the most recognizable symbols of American culture?

The trick will be avoiding a repeat of its experience in Japan, where Starbucks has stopped making money. It had an annual net loss of 454 million yen (\$3.85 million), compared with net income of 735

million a year earlier. Sales at shops open more than a year fell by 17 per cent.

In Japan, more established outfits such as Doutor Coffee are proving tough competitors. They've also quickly adopted Starbucks-like practices.

Doutor, which had 1222 stores at the end of March, appeals to “Old Japan”. Its low-cost, no frills coffee houses allow patrons to smoke. In a deflationary environment like Japan's, folks are being drawn to Doutor's lower prices.

Starbucks appeals to “New Japan”. Its patrons tend to be 20 or 30-something women who like its premium coffee and no-smoking environment.

Starbucks may also be running up against brand fatigue. Japan's economy is notoriously fad driven. But it also may have an image problem relating to its food, say some java aficionados.

“The food isn't fresh and the selection isn't good,” says Tomoko Yokoyama, a 24-year-old insurance office employee. “Starbucks isn't a place I'd go for lunch.”

That's not to say the company can't return to profit. It still has room to expand.

China boasts the world's biggest population and one of its most dynamic economies. Starbucks has just 67 outlets there. And there are none in India, the second-most populous nation.

Starbucks just needs to avoid overdoing it.

(William Pesek)

Fed Trims Interest Rate to 45-Year Low

Washington, June 25 (AP) — The US Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate Wednesday by a quarter percent to 1 percent, the lowest level since Dwight Eisenhower was president.

While Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan and his colleagues repeated their concerns that economic weakness could trigger a destabilizing fall in prices, they also noted hopeful signs that recovery from the 2001 recession may finally be picking up steam.

For that reason, many analysts said the Fed's 13th cut in its federal funds rate could well be the last in a credit-easing campaign that began in January 2001.

(Martin Crutsinger)

EU Rejects Bush Remarks Over Biotech Food

Brussels, Belgium, June 24 (AP) — The European Union on Tuesday rejected a complaint from President Bush that the EU's restrictions on genetically modified crops are hurting poor African farmers.

“It is false we are anti-biotechnology or anti-developing countries,” said EU spokesman Gerassimos Thomas. “These things said by the United States are simply not true.”

On Monday, Bush criticized European restrictions on bio-engineered food, saying they were based on unfounded, unscientific health fears.

(Paul Ames)

EU in “Last Chance” Talks to Reform Farm Policy

Luxembourg, June 25 (AFP) — EU farm ministers launched “last chance” talks to reform the bloc's long-disputed Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), amid cautious hopes of a compromise despite fierce French resistance to ending the CAP's generous subsidies.

The meeting was the third in three weeks. Two previous attempts failed to break down opposition to a CAP reform plan from a farming lobby led by France, which is the biggest beneficiary of the current system.

Commission head Romano Prodi was said to be confident that an accord could be reached. “Mr Prodi is confident in the possibility of reaching a strong and united position on the CAP,” his spokesman said.

Swiss Slashes Workforce by One Third

Basel, Switzerland, June 24 (AFP) — The financially-troubled airline Swiss said it was slashing about 3,000 of the 9,000 jobs at the company and reducing its fleet by about one-third.

The measures, which will come into effect in the autumn, will ensure a 35 percent cut in capacity as the loss-making airline tries to position itself for “far reaching changes in the airline market”, Swiss said in a statement.

Enron Barred from Selling Electricity, Natural Gas

Washington, June 25 (AFP) — US regulators barred bankrupt energy giant Enron from selling electricity or natural gas based on its finding that the company manipulated prices in the 2000-2001 California energy crisis.

Pat Wood, chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, said it was the first time the agency had imposed the so-called “death penalty” for violating rules on energy trading.

Analysts said the impact is minimal, since Enron is no longer active in the market.



Bankrupt energy giant Enron was barred from selling electricity or natural gas by US regulators, citing “misbehavior” by the company in the 2000-2001 California energy crisis.

AFP Photo

AIG to Buy GE's Edison Life

Tokyo, June 26 (Reuters) - American International Group Inc. said on Thursday it would buy General Electric Co.'s Japanese life insurer, GE Edison Life Insurance Co. and GE's US-based auto and home insurance business for \$2.1-\$2.2 billion.

The deal is another step in AIG's campaign to become the world's preeminent life insurer, and marks the first move by GE to scale down its insurance operations, which it put on review last year.

Court Takes Hands-Off Stance on Father's Visitation Rights

By Sun Ming

Last Friday, the Beijing Haidian District People's Court announced it has decided to stop actively supporting a local man's rights to see his daughter, who has been in her mother's custody following the couple's divorce nearly 10 years ago.

In its press release, the court explained it made the decision following the urgings of the 10-year-old girl, who stated explicitly that she never wanted to see her father again.

The judgment was a striking reversal for Zhou Guoqiang, 52, who was the first person in this country to benefit from the visitation rights amendment added to the national Marriage Law in June 2001. According to that amendment, following a divorce, the parent not granted custody retains the right to visit his or

her child.

According to the court, Zhou divorced his ex-wife Wang Lan in June 1999, with custody for their daughter Ying Ying, born in 1993, given to the mother. Subsequently, Wang refused to allow Zhou to visit their daughter on the grounds that the girl would be upset at the sight of her father.

Wang told the court she hates her ex-husband, mostly because he did not get along with her mother, who died of lung cancer in 1999. She testified that she believes a major factor in her mother's death was anger towards Zhou.

In July 2001, one month after the national Marriage Law was amended, Zhou filed suit against his ex-wife, becoming the first person in China to demand the enforcement

of parental visitation rights.

The court found in favor of Zhou in November that year, enabling him to see his daughter for the first time since the divorce.

Wang Jingliang, a Beijing Haidian District People's Court judge who accompanied Zhou on his first visit, told *Beijing Today*, "Ying Ying turned back and headed home as soon as her mother and I left. Later, she told me she did not want to see her father at all."

A total of eight court judges ended up going with Zhou when he met his daughter 16 more times until May 2003, normally in a garden near her home.

"We always tried to ask Ying Ying to talk to her father, but she never once did," recalled Wang. The judge also said that the girl told him

she hated her father because of her grandmother's death, and because he had taken a small car, one of her favorite toys, which Zhou later explained he wanted as a memento.

"Even though Zhou has the right to visit his daughter according to the amendment of the national Marriage Law, we are no longer going to enforce the observation of that right in this case in respect of his daughter's will," said judge Wang. He told *Beijing Today* that court officials had talked with Ying Ying and her mother several times to try to convince them to take a softer stance towards Zhou, but they refused.

According to the court, this is the first time in China that a court has decided to step back from enforcing a parent's legal visitation rights.



Military medical staff celebrated their success after the last local SARS patients were released last Friday. Photo by Jia Ting

Last Patients Send Home from Xiaotangshan Hospital

By Ivy Zhang

Xiaotangshan Hospital, a field facility built solely for treating SARS victims, discharged its final 18 recovered patients last Friday. The over 1,000 military medical staff that manned the hospital the past several weeks have all left Beijing, declaring the facilities' mission accomplished, for now.

Located on the northern outskirts of Beijing, the Xiaotangshan hospital was built in eight days by approximately 7,000 workers. The hospital, equipped with 1,000 beds, has 22 wards and nine auxiliary examination departments.

Since it opened on May 1, the hospital admitted 680 SARS patients, only eight of whom died, giving the hospital a mortality rate of less than 1.2 percent.

A meeting to commend and send off the hospital's troop of People's Liberation Army medical workers was held in Beijing Sunday. A total of 19 military medical institutions and 453 individuals were given awards in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the fight against the SARS epidemic.

To support Beijing's anti-SARS fight, the Central Military Commission transferred 1,200 excellent doctors from military and armed police medical units around the country to the hospital.

After being thoroughly disinfected, the hospital will remain open for a certain period of time and all the medical equipment within will not be moved. In the case of possible SARS outbreaks in the future, the hospital will be able to be put into immediate operation and receive patients as a designated SARS treatment facility.

Foreign Company Reclaims Domain Name

By Ivy Zhang

A local court has ordered a Chongqing-based agent of the US' Cummins Engine Company to stop using the domain name cummins.com.cn, which the domestic firm registered about five years ago.

When Cummins began the process of registering its domain name in this country, company staff found they had beaten to the punch in 1998 by Chongqing Cummins Engineering, a local agent of Chongqing Cummins Engine, a joint venture partly owned by the US company.

Cummins then filed a lawsuit to Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court accusing Chongqing Cummins of having maliciously registered the domain name, thereby misleading consumers, infringing on Cummins' legal rights and engaging in unfair competition.

In September 2002, the court instructed Chongqing Cummins to terminate use of and cancel the contested domain name.

However, Chongqing Cummins failed to stop using the name and took no actions to cancel it, according to a press release issued by the court last week.

On May 28 this year, Cummins submitted an application requesting the court enforce its earlier verdict.

Then, last Thursday, following a demand by the court, the domain name of cummins.com.cn was deleted at Computer Networking Information Center of China Academy of Sciences, the main center for domain name registration in this country, meaning Chongqing Cummins will never be able to use the name again.

"We registered the name first. They have no sense of brand protection," Han Xia, a business director of Chongqing Cummins, told *Beijing Today* by phone this Wednesday, "They want to seize the market and keep agent companies from owning the domain name."

Subsequent to the deletion, Chongqing Cummins has begun to use a new domain name cqcummins.com.cn, with the first two letters standing for Chongqing.

According to the press release, a representative of Cummins told the court that they had negotiated with Chongqing Cummins about returning the domain for three years to no avail. He added that Chongqing Cummins registered the trademark Cummins, owned by Cummins Engine Company, Inc., as its domain name without any proper authority.

Court press officer Guo Jingxia confirmed that Chongqing Cummins had infringed the US company's exclusive rights to use of the trademark name.

Starbucks Gets Historic Face

By Sun Ming

After being the subject of controversy a couple years ago by setting up an outlet inside the Forbidden City, Starbucks Coffee has again raised eyebrows around town by opening a new café designed with a distinctly Chinese feel in a historic part of town.

The new Baihefang branch, Starbucks' 33rd in Beijing, went into business on Saturday in the Shichahai area. The café's architecture takes clear cues from classical Chinese buildings and its launch was celebrated by a traditional lion dance performance on Friday.

Wang Jinglong, executive president of Beijing Meida Starbucks Coffee told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday that Starbucks hopes the new café will further their intention of melding coffee culture with Chinese culture.



Photo by Qi Heng

Jazz Fights off Post-SARS Blues

By Shan Jinliang

Beijing Jintai Arts Museum's International Friendship Hall was filled with music on Wednesday evening after two very quiet months. It was also the first Sino-foreign cultural ex-

change activity led by a foreign embassy in Beijing since the city was declared SARS-free.

The event, which consisted of a lecture followed by a jazz concert, was co-sponsored by the US Embassy, the

museum and Beijing Jazz Cultural Development Corporation and drew and audience of over 200 people.

Staff from the US Embassy said they hoped the music would create a bridge between their country and

China and represent their best wishes to Beijing following the difficult SARS crisis.

Darrell Jenks, director of American Center for Education Exchange hosted and played in the show.

Joint Forces Bust Cross-Country Drug Ring

By Lisa Lee

A multi-region police force has shut down a long-operating drug trafficking route from Sichuan Province to Beijing and arrested a drug ring composed mainly of Beijingers, according to a press release issued by the Beijing Bureau of Public Security before June 26.

A combined team of police from the Beijing and Sichuan bureaus of public security spent four months investigating the ring, in the end arresting six suspects and seizing 150,000 yuan in cash, four cars used to traffic drugs and 2.6 kilograms of highly pure heroin.

An article in Tuesday's *Beijing Youth Daily* based on the police press release reported that in late 2002, Beijing anti-drug forces first cracked down on part of this drug trafficking ring and confiscated 3.5 kilograms of drugs. During two months of secret investigations conducted prior to the arrests, they came across a man named Wang Si who was closely related to those apprehended, but the police did not pick him up at that time. Investigators discovered that Wang Si's real name was Wang Shuming, 44, whose home was on Wanshou Road in Haidian District.

After the arrests, Wang went into hiding, even changing his mobile phone number.

Then, in February this year, he reappeared and contacted a Ms. Hu in Chongqing and another woman named Zhang Jiaqiong in Sichuan to discuss a drug deal, according to the police report.

On February 14, learning that Wang was planning to fly to Sichuan and

Chongqing for a large drugs buy, the National Drug Control Bureau ordered the anti-drug departments of both Beijing and Sichuan to cooperate and organize a special team to pursue the case.

On February 15, two local members of that police team followed Wang to Chongqing, where he then got into a long-distance bus and headed to the city of Yibin in Sichuan to meet Zhang.

Wang bought over one kilogram of drugs in Yibin on February 26 and brought them back to Beijing the next day.

In March, the Beijing police got a tip that Wang was heading to Yibin again and informed the public security bureau there. The Yibin and Beijing authorities then decided to cooperate to crack down on the operation.

On March 26, when Wang and Zhang met at the Yibin bus station to conduct a deal, local police suddenly jumped out and arrested them and two other people, also seizing around 2.6 kilograms of heroin and 150,000 yuan.

Five days later, Wang was sent back to Beijing under escort and immediately interrogated by local police upon his return.

Wang told the police that Zang Ying (pseudonym), the leader of the drug ring, lived in a village in Chaoyang District. The police found Zang there and arrested him and confiscated two cars used to transport drugs.

On April 2 and 4, two other members of the group, surnamed Chen and Yang, were arrested, effectively smashing the ring.

Potter Fever Strikes Again

By Sun Ming

Even though only the original English version of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* is currently available in Beijing, the release of the book has sparked a new round of Potter mania around the city in the past week.

According to a report from Tuesday's *Beijing Star Daily*, 3,500 copies of the newest Harry Potter novel were put on the local market on Saturday, and most had been sold by Monday.

The fifth installment in the series about boy wizard Harry Potter went on sale worldwide at midnight on Saturday (Greenwich time). It was the first time that China has been part of such a global book launch.

"It's our fastest selling book ever," said Li Minyue, manager of the Beijing Wangfujing Xinhua Book Store, "Even though the book goes for 178 yuan, we sold a total of around 1,000 copies in just two days."

Li told *Beijing Today* that most buyers of the book are college students or high school students accompanied by their parents.

The China International Book Trade Company has announced it has moved to import more copies of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, which should reach shelves in domestic bookstores in December. The Chinese version of the novel is expected to hit the market by that month.



Sales of the newest Harry Potter book started at 8 am on Saturday. Photo by Lu Xin

Just a Bargain

Female graduate seeks millionaire husband

By Xiao Rong

It seems she may be lucky enough to win both a husband and considerable wealth.

A 24-year-old graduate student at a university in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province has contributed to a sensational story for the past two weeks due to her unusual marriage requirement.

The woman, who majored in economics, went to Wuhan's Dacheng Marriage Consulting Company looking for a husband who was worth at least 10 million yuan, according to a *Wuhan Evening News* report on June 15.

Only men with assets of over 10 million yuan would be allowed to meet her daughter, echoed the bold mother.

A divorced businessman from Shenzhen went to the same marriage consulting company 10 days later. The 44-year-old, who has a 17-year-old daughter, is now doing business in Wuhan and his ideal partner is well-educated unmarried woman under the age of 30.

The company recommended the graduate student to him. The woman and her mother met the man at a local hotel. The meeting lasted for four hours and at the end, a deal was struck.

Beijing Today contacted Dacheng Marriage Consulting Company and manager Hu Qin confirmed the story.

"We received a call from the woman's mother recently saying that the two have been getting along well and intend to

marry this year," said Hu.

Hu's company checked all of the man's credentials and found he was worth over 100 million yuan. But the man hesitated at first, fearing that the age difference between the two was too much.

"Young women nowadays tend to seek husbands with abundant wealth or high social positions," says Hu.

Since its first release on Sina.com, the story has stirred fierce debate regarding the increasingly material motives behind marriage in modern society. Opinions follow:

Zhang Xiaoxiao, a female doctoral student at Renmin University,

I can understand what the woman has done, though I definitely would not choose my marriage in the same way.

She was too strongly motivated by material desire. She thought she was beautiful enough to find a rich husband who could support her so that she needn't struggle for her own future. But who knows whether they will be happy once they get married?

Women nowadays have diverse social values regarding marriage. Some may cherish real love, while others may pursue practical benefits.

Though one of the common ideas about marriage is that women should be pretty enough and men should be rich enough, I still value love first.

Xiong, a freshman major in psychology at Beijing University,

The story reflects the increasingly material attitudes of the campus. Some students, especially females, tend to be more practical when choosing partners. In some ways this is not a bad thing.

But I still think one should be independent, whether you are a man or a woman. In my opinion, women cannot

rely too much on men.

Peng Li, a journalist at Beijing Daily

It's a natural choice, given the primitive survival rules of mankind. Even animals have the same rule. Female penguins, for instance, marry male penguins that can pile more stones because it means these kind of male penguins are strong enough to build a house and protect their wives.

So it's a universal natural rule that women tend to require men to undertake more responsibilities, whether to use their strength, wisdom or wealth. In this case, men's wealth are what the woman wants.

If we look at it from a different angle, it shows that people are beginning to acknowledge private wealth. Modern society should be tolerant of various ways of life: some men are well educated, some have high positions, while others are rich, but each of them has their own advantage.

Even if this marriage is a bargain, we have no right to disrespect their choice. To speak the truth, I admire the courage of the woman graduate who can speak out frankly her pursuit.

Qian Xun, professor of philosophy at Tsinghua University

The marriage between the student and the rich man is based on an equal exchange rather than love. There's nothing wrong with it legally. But social development should encourage individuals to focus more on spiritual pursuit.

Though the woman has a good degree, she doesn't have her own independent career to fulfill her values. Instead, she chose to marry a rich husband. This kind of student actually reflects the failure of our university education.

Wu Fang, staff at Xiangshiwang Marriage Consulting Company in Beijing

I'm personally not in favor of this kind of marriage based first on material interests, which is not so secure in my opinion. Young women should first find their own values.

In this specific example, the 17-year-old daughter might be a barrier, as the future stepmother is only 24. It will be very difficult for the man to balance taking care of both his young wife and daughter.

Most young women who come to my company to seek husbands tend to require a man to own houses, cars and money, even though the men may be much older. This is quite different compared with the early 1990s or earlier.

Rich men are usually cautious, however, as they don't want a woman to marry them just because of their wealth, so most of them would ask us not to reveal their wealth.

So I would suggest women be more independent and sensible in choosing a husband. Wealth is only one of the requirements to constitute a happy marriage.

Views from Internet Surfers:
IP:211.151.91.

It's totally a personal choice, why should so many people reprimand it? I don't see anything wrong with a beautiful and well-educated woman marrying a rich man.

IP:66.185.85.

I myself am a graduate student and I think it's better to find a young and promising man. Why should I rely totally on an old man who could even be my uncle, even though he is rich enough?

IP:66.185.85.

Ninety nine percent of what constitute happiness doesn't have anything to do with money. There are so many things in real life that you cannot exchange with money, like youth, love, dreams, ambitions, hope, confidence and most of all sincerity. And only independence can help one feel or create all these elements that make real happiness.

be in a state of heightened alert because of the seriousness of the terrorist threat. You'd have thought the first place where the heightening would have gone on is in the royal palaces."

— Oliver Letwin, Conservative Party spokesman on home affairs, told the British Broadcasting Corp, after comedian Aaron Barschak, 36, climbed up a tree and over a terrace to slip into Windsor Castle on Monday, sporting a salmon pink ball gown, turban and fake Osama bin Laden-style beard and made a surprise appearance at Prince William's 21st birthday.

"It's not up to Belgium to decide if its justice is

Readers & Leaders

We welcome your letters and articles, preferably around 700 words. Please give your full name, current address and phone number (not necessarily for publication). You can email us at comment@ynet.com or fax us at (010) 6590 2525.

The views expressed in this column are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of *Beijing Today*.

International Conventions and Restitution of the Cultural Spoils of War

By Yin Tongyun

Six rare sculptures that had been looted from an ancient tomb in Northwest China and offered for sale in New York were returned to the Chinese government by the US Customs Service on Tuesday last week. This event showed how far the world has come in facilitating the return of illegally trafficked goods to their rightful owners. Yet it also highlights the difficulties we still face, especially concerning cultural property looted during the wars before 1949.

As a country with a rich cultural heritage, China has a long history of loss of cultural properties resulting from wars during the 19th and 20th centuries. To most Chinese people, the collections of Chinese paintings in the British Museum, the Chinese ceramics and pottery in the French Guimet Museum as well as many of those rare and high-quality ancient collections displayed or restored in more than 200 museums in 47 foreign countries are scars of China's past. To them, what was lost was not only historical and cultural symbols, but also national dignity and esteem.

However, the spoils of wars affect a rich variety of countries and involve diversified historical factors. The recovery and return of cultural relics also concern diverse values and conflicting interests. The three conventions set up to deal with this (Convention and Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, known as the Hague Convention and Protocol of 1954; Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and

Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, known as 1970 UNESCO Convention; and Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, known as 1995 UNIDROIT Convention) were adopted under the auspices of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). They form the basis for bilateral and multilateral negotiations and adjudications on restitution of cultural properties looted during wars.

China has been seeking international cooperation and support in protecting its cultural heritage and has signed all three conventions. Recent years have seen some restitution of cultural relics with the help of these conventions. However we must acknowledge that all of those recovered objects were either illegally excavated or stolen and exported in recent decades. As to those cultural properties that were plundered during wars before 1949, these conventions present the following difficulties.

Firstly, the conventions only have binding force on signatory party members. That means if a country does not ratify the conventions, it has no legal obligation to another country's claim. As to the 91 countries who joined the 1970 UNESCO Convention, most of them are countries that seek protection for their cultural property; countries that don't need this protection are notably absent. Germany, Japan, Switzerland and some Scandinavian countries have declined to implement the conventions. This makes it more difficult for countries like China to reclaim stolen relics.

Secondly, the conventions clearly

note the limitations on retroactivity. Being party to the conventions does not mean a country can get back any object illegally taken away during any historical period. 1970 UNESCO and 1995 UNIDROIT Conventions only require the relevant state, at the request of the State Party of Origin, to take appropriate steps to recover and return cultural property imported or stolen after the Conventions have entered into force.

Thirdly, the conventions also have articles on the Statutes of Limitations. That means any claim for restitution must be made within a certain period following their removal (75 years according to 1995 UNIDROIT Convention).

Undoubtedly, it is unreasonable to assume that ratifying the international conventions would automatically necessitate each party to fulfill all articles in those conventions. International conventions depend upon governments' good faith to adhere to them because of moral imperatives, rather than because of threat of concrete sanctions.

To today's China, restituting illegally displaced cultural relics according to international conventions and cooperation is a contribution to prohibiting illicit trade of cultural property. Establishing reasonable and efficient systems of protection including legislation, cultural property management, exposure of illicit excavation and export, and education of the general public will be further positive measures.

Yin Tongyun, independent researcher in Museum Studies, Cultural Heritage Protection and Chinese Art History

Getting Attention

By Cindy L. Jiang

It's becoming a common sight in China. A person climbs up to the top of a building or a construction scaffold and then threatens to throw themselves off unless they get what they're owed. This catches the eyes of on-lookers and the media, and usually it works.

Usually it's a case of a worker who hasn't been paid, or someone who wants someone to solve their problems.

Nobody would let someone jump to their death without doing something about it. Neither would the police. Nor would the media. So these people are taken seriously. Therefore, their problems are put forth and solved quickly, most of the time. Pretending to jump, it works! So it continues, in Beijing and in other cities.

But it might start to arouse boredom and cynicism — arousing the concern of so many people just to solve your personal problems! According to a recent report by *Xiaoxiang Morning*

Post in Hunan Province, a migrant worker arranged an elaborate plan to get back the money he was owed.

Before resorting to climb up the 25-meter scaffold, 58-year-old Gong Houchu had tried for 50 days to get the money he should have been paid for his work. He was owed 400 yuan. It doesn't sound like much, but it is to migrant workers, some of whom earn less than 10 yuan per day. His boss gave him an IOU, not the real money that his poor family had been waiting for, so what else could he do? He saw himself as pleading for what he should have, no more.

Perhaps he could be accused of crying wolf. And indeed, this "jumping show" is a powerful weapon. But who should be blamed?

Gong, and others who have tried the same thing, are undoubtedly victims. Something should have been done before the "show" was put on. In fact, 50 days of effort made Gong conclude: "I won't trust anybody any more. Now I just trust money." That is

why they finally choose to climb high and threaten to jump. Finally, with the police accompanying, the head of the construction team climbed up and handed over the money, Gong started to step down.

With the money in his hand, Gong was taken away by the police. Still there was a kind of happiness and satisfaction on Gong's face. He must have been thinking that he had won, no matter whether or not he would be held in detention for days for disturbing social order.

Someone who successfully gets his money back would of course feel he is the winner. But he also gets punished for the method of getting his back pay, besides the risk of losing his life. Though it is called a "jumping show" by some people who criticize the migrant workers, one of the weakest groups in China, they should realize the reasons behind the action and take on some responsibility.

Cindy L. Jiang, deputy director of Beijing Today

Better to Do than to Speak

By Mat. Windy

In China, there are some things you can't say but that you can do. If a colleague wants to borrow money from you, you can't reject him immediately.

You can say you must consult your wife, for instance. Your colleague must know it is an excuse, and that really you are refusing him. In the west, I could frankly tell my colleague that

I can't lend him any money because I don't have any to give him. This doesn't affect our relationship.

It shows the difference in our traditional culture and customs. In China, when a boy asks his mother whether he can go swimming in the river, his mother would probably refuse, saying it's dangerous. But if the boy goes swimming without his mother's approval, when he

comes back and tells her, she may only say he should be careful next time.

In China, something complicated can only be sensed and experienced by yourself, nobody can tell you what you should or should not do. You must judge and perceive depending on your own experience.

Mat. Windy, first time contributor to Beijing Today.

SOUND BITES

"It suggests that the rhesus monkey may be a precursor to our ability to integrate audio and visual information at the same time. The finding opens up a whole avenue of studying the evolution of speech and for understanding the brain mechanisms for our ability to make associations."

— Asif Ghazanfar, of the Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics in Tuebingen, Germany, said Wednesday. A finding suggests that rhesus monkeys can match a friendly coo sound and a threatening call to corresponding visual cues.

"It clearly is a very serious lapse. We're meant to

"If we fail to unite, every problem may become a crisis and every enemy a gigantic monster. Many people have said that Europe is too old. Maybe, but the old age helps us to understand our strengths and our weaknesses."

— European Commission President Romano Prodi. He was speaking alongside President Bush and Greek Prime Minister Constantine Simitis, whose country holds the current European Union presidency. President Bush and European leaders stood united Wednesday in demanding that Iran abandon any nuclear weapons ambitions.

By Sun Zhang



A boat searches for victims on the Yangtze River.

Passenger Ship Sinks in Sichuan

Zhang can't swim and she struggled to stay afloat in the water. Fortunately, she caught hold of a wooden stool. "Three people were holding onto that stool. But only two were saved," said Zhang.

A passenger ship carrying 65 people collided with a cargo ship in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River in Chongqing Municipality last Thursday, killing at least 30 people. There were 12 survivors, but 23 are still missing, according to the State Safety Production Supervision Administration.

The likely cause of the accident was that "the ships went out in thick fog, contrary to regulations", according to the Yangtze River Navigation Administration under the Ministry of Transportation.

At 7:50 am last Thursday, the passenger ship Fuling No.10 was heading downriver. It suddenly collided with a cargo ship named Jianglong No. 806 which was heading upriver. The passenger ship rapidly started sinking. The collision occurred at Lin city, Fuling, about 550 kilometers away from Yichang.

What happened?

Zou Hui, a *China News Service* reporter, visited the site of the collision last Thursday afternoon. He saw the cargo ship still berthed at the riverside. Rescue boats were searching for survivors.

Shu Chenglu, a doctor at Lin city central hospital, said they began to receive survivors around 11 am. The eldest was aged 63 and the youngest was 13.

Zhang Qiuyue, 15, a student at Fuling No. 2 high school, had just finished the end-of-term examination the previous day and

went on the passenger ship with her elder sister who studies at the same school. Zhang said the accident happened less than ten minutes after the ship started out. She was saved by a local fisherman while her sister was still missing.

According to Zhang, the passenger ship had two levels. When passengers suddenly saw the cargo ship bearing down on them, some people started making phone calls. Seconds later, the cargo ship hit the middle part of the passenger ship, which sank right away.

Zhang can't swim and she struggled to stay afloat in the water. Fortunately, she caught hold of a wooden stool. "Three people were holding onto that stool. But only two were saved," said Zhang. She said she saw her sister floating on the surface of the water but she hasn't seen her since.

Another survivor, Zhao Dajun, said that most survivors were saved by a local fishing boat.

Zhang Wenjun, who also survived, said the fog was very thick that day. People were unable to see other vessels in the distance.

Aftermath

Two days later, a State Council leading investigation group was formed. They began to look into the case last Saturday.

Advanced devices for locating sunken boats were delivered from Shanghai and Tianjin on Monday. The cause of the accident is still

unclear.

The search work is still continuing. The first victim found on the day of the accident has been identified. The girl was named Wang Xue, 17, a Fuling resident.

Around 4pm on Saturday, Zhang Zhonglin went to the funeral home in Fuling. He said his mother Ran Qilian was on the ship at the time of accident and she had been missing since.

One hour later, an undertaker's vehicle drove into the funeral home. Zhang followed in. The legal medical expert in the examination room found a personal chop with the name Zhang Yufu. Hearing this, Zhang who was waiting outside the room, burst into tears. He choked and said, "It is my mother. She took my father's chop with her."

Zhang's two sisters and other relatives came around later. Zhang's seven-year-old daughter said her grandmother had promised to take her to visit her two aunts during the vacation.

As for compensation, 3 million yuan has been put together by the Fuling local government, Sanxia Ship Company, to which the sunken ship belonged, and Jianglong Company, which owns the cargo ship. Victims at or above the age of 16 are expected to receive compensation of 500,000 yuan each while those below the age limit will get 400,000 yuan.

(Edited by Ivy Zhang)

Overseas Laborers Cheated

By Su Wei/Meng Ming

With the hope of making money as overseas laborers, 32 peasants from Pingtan, Fuzhou, Fujian Province, left for Malaysia on March 18 this year. Their trip was arranged by two organizers who they all knew. One month later, the laborers found they had been cheated. They spent the next two months trying to get back what was owed them, but in vain.

Two weeks ago, their families back in China still had no idea of their whereabouts. At the end of last week, they found out the laborers were being held in a refugee camp in Kuala Lumpur.

Gone missing

"The last time he called me was on the evening of June 11. He hung up saying there were people coming," recalled Wang Yongkun, whose 23-year-old son, Wang Changwei, went to Malaysia through the arrangements made by Wang Yonggui, another local man from Pingtan, and You Degen, a man from Minhou. The families of some of the other laborers received similar phone calls on the same day.

"We did not know what had happened to them," Wang Yongkun said. Wang Xianghua felt guilty about having let her husband, Wong Zuhui, go to Malaysia. "I thought he might make some money there. But now..." she choked. "I do not know how to tell my family that he is missing. I cannot help crying when I think about him but I have to force myself not to cry in front of people."

Since June 11 few of these families have been able to sleep at night. They have been urgently trying to find out the whereabouts of the laborers from any relevant government departments in Fuzhou.

Having made numerous phone calls, they finally got through to You Degen, who organized the trip. "His explanations were inconsistent," Wang Yongkun said. "First he said the laborers had been caught by the Ministry of Politics of Malaysia. He then said they had been picked up by the local Mafia. Later he said it was the Ministry of Civil Affairs that caught them."

Wang Yongkun recalls that You Degen and Wang Yonggui said it would be easy to earn a higher salary working in Malaysia. The workers each had to pay a 38,500 yuan arrangement fee for the trip. "We did not know what kind of life it would be. We often hear that laborers working overseas get cheated," said Wang Xianghua. "But we thought these two men would not cheat us. Wang Yonggui is also from Pingtan and You is his relative."

Miserable existence

In a fax sent by the laborers on May 23 to the Consulate of the Chinese Embassy in Malaysia they described their miserable life after their arrival in Malaysia.

The fax says during the first month they worked as decoration workers in Kuala Lumpur on a project contracted by You Degen. They were allowed hardly any rest from 8 am to 10 pm. "But the Laborers Law of Malaysia says there should be a rest after working for two hours and the rest can last between 10 and 20 minutes," they wrote. "If someone was found out taking a rest, You Degen and Wang Yonggui would threaten to send them back to China without giving back the arrangement fee."

These laborers say they were promised a daily wage for working eight hours of 55 Malaysian ringgit (MYR) and the hourly payment for working overtime and on public holidays was 1.5 times

and twice that for normal working hours. "But after working 32 days we were only paid between 1,250 and 1,650 MYR, much less than the promised 2,100 MYR," they wrote in the fax.

Having talked to some overseas Chinese, they found out that it was impossible for Chinese to get an authorized working license in Malaysia. They then went to the two organizers, asking to get all the due wages. Upon being refused, they insisted on getting the arrangement fees back and returning to China. These laborers say their requirement was guaranteed in an



Wang Yongkun

obligation deed agreed by You before their departure.

After each of them was given back 30,000 yuan from the total arrangement fees, You refused to give them any more money. "Even we ourselves cannot return home as our passports are held by You and Wang," the fax said.

After April 26, these laborers refused to work for You so he refused to provide meals for them. Without working licenses these laborers could not find any jobs. They said they couldn't even afford the cheapest bread.

They started to quarrel more frequently with You Degen and Wang Yonggui. According to the laborers' families, their conflicts with the two organizers escalated one or two days before they went "missing".

You admitted to the laborers' families that he called the police to catch the laborers, saying they were illegal immigrants. He also said they were trouble makers.

On June 13, the laborers were sent to a refugee camp in Kuala Lumpur.

Still continuing

According to Lu Yueke, a counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Malaysia, the embassy contacted families of the laborers this Tuesday and said as long as these families pay for the plane tickets, 1,760 yuan per person, the laborers would be able to leave the refugee camp and go back to China.

All of families are consulting lawyers to sue the two organizers.

Huang Linfeng, of Fujian Yuanyi Lawyer's Office, believes that the whole trip was illegal. He says the intermediary company - Zhongxin Agency - that You used in arranging the labor export was a private overseas one. "According to Chinese law, overseas companies are not allowed to involve themselves in export of Chinese labor," he said. "Even if the company was a domestic one, it still did not have a license from the government to conduct labor export business."

In Huang's opinion, the two organizers should be sentenced to imprisonment of at least seven years, perhaps even life, besides being fined or having their property confiscated due to the large number of people and money involved.



The cargo ship Jianglong No. 806 berths at the riverside.

Xinhua Photos

Go See the Ocean

Five of Wang Rong's first group of pictures taken in the waters off Hainan.

By Yu Shanshan

On the morning of September 24, 2002, Wang Rong and five other people were waiting to fly to Cheju Island off Republic of Korea. Next to them, more than a thousand Chinese athletes and journalists were waiting for planes to Busan, where the 14th Asian Olympic Games were about to begin.

Two days later, while the world's eyes were fixed on the Games' first event, shooting, Wang was picking up China's first medal in his field. He got the bronze medal in the 13th World Underwater Photography Contest. "But no one knew that I was the first person from China to win an award in this contest, even though we were only a short distance from Busan." Wang described his success to *Beijing Today* last Friday, sitting in the small office of his newly established underwater equipment company Ocean Image, tucked away in a residential community south of Yong'anli.

After living in Japan for eight years, Wang, 33, returned to Beijing last April, hoping to begin photographing some of the extensive waters around China's coastline. It's something no-one has really done before. "In Japan, it's very hard to collect materials on the seas around China, so I thought, why not go back?"

When Wang was taking part in the contest on Cheju Island, he got to see the Black Tide, the world's third strongest ocean current, which is filled with numerous species from other oceans. "The moment I saw the sea I felt as though I was coming home," he says. The water off Cheju made him think of China's seas, "which must have many special characteristics that I still don't know."

The seas around China run from frigid northern climates down to the tropics, so there's plenty of material for Wang. "At the beginning, we'll have to focus on some pretty places, tropical ocean waters, so that we can arouse people's interest." But after spending two weeks in the waters off Hainan, Wang found he had a problem. "I couldn't see any fish. Ocean scenery without any creatures is a bit lacking."

While looking for ocean waters that were relatively unpolluted, Wang spent a year searching for sponsors and cooperation with research institutes and media for his photography plans. But he didn't find any takers. "There is no market for underwater activities in China, and research institutes

don't need photographers, just scientists." **Grand blue calling**

His first diving experience was also his first underwater photography job. In his junior year at Wako University in Japan he began to take photos for the clubs. In July, when the underwater club opened, he was asked to join them. "But I don't know how to dive," Wang said to the teacher. "Doesn't matter, you'll learn," the teacher answered and gave him a simple underwater camera. "It must be very interesting, I thought, so after one day of training in the school's swimming pool, I went with them to the sea."

Wang found it pretty tricky at first. "I kept rolling around in the water, trying to keep balance but I must have looked more like a ball. I wasn't able to take many photos." After taking two, the camera stopped working because the teacher forgot to seal the watertight tape around it.

But this first try started his love for the ocean. "At 20, I saw the sea for the first time in Qingdao. But in Japan it was the first time I had seen living creatures such as cuttlefish, instead of dead ones in the market." Wang discovered that the cuttlefish is translucent in the water and even gives off light. When it swims, the skirt around its body floats, as if it is dancing. "It was so beautiful. And there were all kinds of soft coral and sea anemone, blossoming like a big sunflower," he recalls.

The color in the sea stunned him. "I never imagined the color under water was so vivid — so red, so purple and so blue. My brain was empty, and I felt as though I'd just taken marijuana. Everything looked so exotic, full of fantastic color. After I got back to the shore, I felt my soul had been left in the ocean."

He was also intoxicated by "Grand Blue", the name given by Italian fishermen to that part of the water where you can't see the waves on the surface and you don't know whether you are going up or down. You're totally surrounded by a deep blue. "It's an amazing feeling, combined with fear, loneliness, and excitement; unforgettable."

The answer

In his junior year in Japan, he became a freelance photographer, providing photos for local newspapers and magazines, which helped him to travel around the country and dive as often as possible. On graduation in 2000, he decided to be a diving coach, "so that I could see those fantasies in the ocean every day". Sponsored by his university teacher and the head of the newspaper he worked for, he managed to get a license and underwater photography equipment in late 2001.

At the beginning of 2002, after

spending three days diving in the tropical ocean off Okinawa that Wang had longed to see for years, he knew he had found a more exciting career than being a diving coach, underwater photography. "Almost at the same moment I thought, why only take pictures in seas off foreign countries? Why not take photos of China's seas?" he says. "I am not that patriotic. I just thought there was no one else doing this, so I'll be the first."

This seemed to be the interesting and unusual career Wang had been looking for since his youth when he enrolled in Beijing Film Academy. He had studied script writing for one year but quit because he found it too constraining. He joined CCTV to work as a TV editor and director, but this was restricting too. "In my four years at Wako University I kept asking myself, 'What do I really want to do?' At last, I found the answer."

Persevering seaman and photographer

One of Wang's inspirations has been Ikuo Nakamura, a Japanese photographer who has been recording the changes in Tokyo Bay since 1969 when Japan's economic development started to have a serious impact on the local environment. When Wang saw an exhibition showing 30 years of Nakamura's photos in 1999, he was deeply impressed. "People living in the city didn't realize how much Tokyo Bay had suffered and lost many of its original natural features. Ikuo's work arouses memories."

"The disappearance of memory is painful, especially for old people. And city development removes many aspects of the past. Though Ikuo's lens is focused on nature, its actual focus is on people."

A group of pictures recording a day in the life of an old man who was the last to process kelp by hand in the bay left Wang with the deepest impression. With more and more sand morphing into concrete buildings and harbor structures, families that lived on processing kelp left and took up other occupations, till only the old man was left. Since there was no place on the seashore for him to dry his kelp, he moved into a parking lot. If a car claimed his space, he moved to another one. The photos recorded his moving from place to place.

The stubborn old man, in the eyes of Wang, is Ikuo himself, who has stuck to one philosophy for thirty years. "Perseverance must be backed up by a strong understanding, the ability to grasp the rules of development and then surpass



Wang Rong Photo by Song Guoqiang

the rules to foresee the future. So instead of just saying 'you can't eat wild animals', you should have a very broad view."

"The good news for China is that we are still in a developing period, and we can still take lessons from other countries," he added.

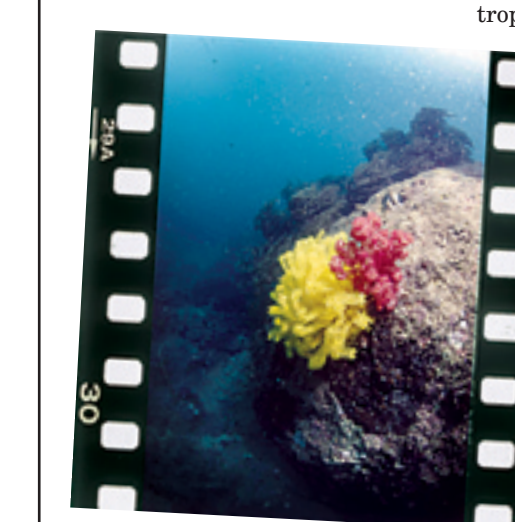
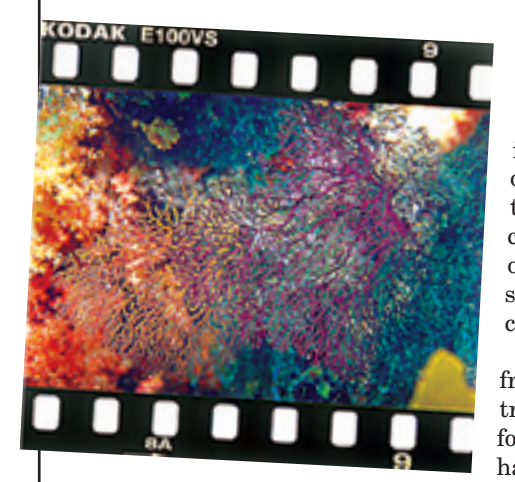
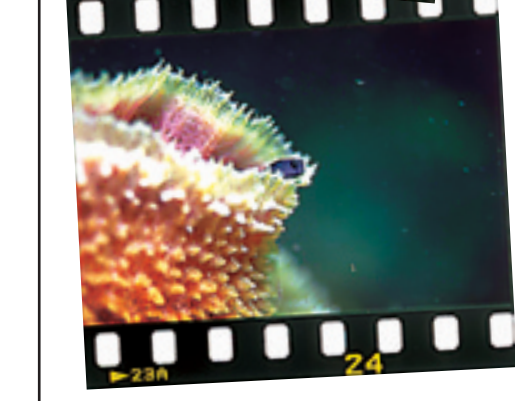
Clown fish

Wang Rong attributes China's apparent lack of interest in its own seas to traditional fears and tales. For one thing, the ocean, in many people's eyes, represents the unknown. "In Chinese fairy tales, the ocean was home to the ugly and terrible dragon king, while in the west they dreamed of mermaids. It's our culture that causes such ill feeling. I hope my efforts can help people appreciate the beautiful seas and the marvelous creatures living in it."

Wang gives the example of a kind of fish found in tropical waters, called the Clown Fish. It lives in poisonous sea anemones and is such a common sight that divers don't pay much attention to it. But Wang has always been struck by how fiercely they protect their home. Even if he was just passing and was nowhere near, he would notice the fish rushing out to try and drive him away. "Even such a small fish knows it should protect its environment. Why do humans with their big brains care so little for their own home?"

After diving over 2,000 times in foreign oceans, Wang hopes more Beijing people will develop an interest in the sea. "Though Mount Everest is magnificent, you'll find most foreigners chose to climb their own mountains first. In diving, I also prefer our own seas, though they are not so clear. If more and more people get a chance to go to the sea near their home they will see the problem. They will try to change it, then maybe the seas will become clearer."

Wang's company aims to help in this by selling diving equipment. "We don't have the market in China yet, but we'll open it," he says.



Imperial City on Display

Peking Opera costumes from the Qing Dynasty



By Zhao Pu

The Imperial City is often mistaken for the Forbidden City, but in fact, the two terms refer to distinct geographical areas of old Beijing. The Imperial City includes the Forbidden City, extending from Tian'anmen to Di'anmen in the north and from the west side of Zhongnanhai to what is now Wangfujing in the east. Acting as a service zone and defense buffer for the Forbidden City proper, the Imperial City was also completely off limits to ordinary citizens.

The Imperial City Art Gallery, which opened last weekend, will help dispel any confusion visitors may have about the distinction between the two. Its permanent exhibition, *The History and Culture of the Imperial City*, retraces the often overlooked role of the "outer" inner city.

Sand table prologue

Beijing comprised of four distinct zones during the Ming and Qing Dynasties: the Forbidden City in the center, for the exclusive use of the emperors; the Imperial City encircling the Forbidden City, to which access was restricted to the royal family, high ranking officials and employees of the Ministry of General Affairs; and the Inner and Outer City accommodating everybody else.

Visitors to the gallery first encounter a sand table model of the old Imperial City, designed according to an 18th century map of the city.

As well as the Forbidden City, Jingshan, the three lakes of Xiyuan, which include today's Zhongnanhai, Beihai and Shishahai, there are numerous recognizable structures, including 28 Taoist and Buddhist temples, a Christian church and a number of government offices, workshops and warehouses.

Nine sections

The exhibition consists of nine sections, presenting different aspects of the history and culture of the Imperial City. A number of cultural relics collected by the Palace Museum are on public display for the first time.

The first section, titled "Construction and Installations," shows how the Imperial City was built according to an ancient architectural treatise of the Zhou Dynasty. The Ancestral Temple in the west and right Altar of Land and Grain in the east were built for sacrificial ceremonies held by the emperors. The three lakes and Jingshan were designed in accordance with special geographic and geomantic principles. The overall design of the Imperial City highlighted the function of defending and serving the Forbidden City.

The second section, "Temples and Religion" introduces the religious development of the period. The emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties built numerous temples throughout the Imperial City. Religion was one of the measures by which the emperors defended their domain. Taoism, as the indigenous religion of China, had been popular through the Ming Dynasty. The rulers of the Qing Dynasty used Buddhism in part to bolster their frontiers and appease minority nationality groups.

"Government Offices and Royal Warehouses" focuses mainly on one of the offices under the Ministry of General Affairs, Zhangyisi. It was the institution in charge of ceremonies and rituals held in the Forbidden City, including weddings and funerals.

Shengpingshu, an office to administrate imperial entertainment, invited four opera troupes from the south to perform in the celebration of Emperor Qianlong's 80th birthday. The four troupes remained in the capital and gradually



A sand table model of the old Imperial City, designed according to an 18th century map
Photos by Txtpuma

combined their art with the local opera, which eventually resulted in the creation of Peking Opera. Two antique costumes of Peking Opera of the Qing Dynasty were displayed in this section.

"Clothing," the fourth section, illustrates in detail the official uniforms of different rankings. The next section "Hutong" retraces the hutongs, or lanes, named after imperial workshops and warehouses within the Imperial City.

"Waterways," the sixth section, focuses on the Yu and Jinshui rivers, which encircled the Forbidden City, and the three lakes to the northwest.

"Defense" introduces the development of the court's defense systems in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, displaying defensive structures and weapons of the era. "Tributes," the eighth part, displays a number of gifts presented to the emperors by domestic officials and foreign envoys, collected by the Palace Museum.

The last section "Today's Imperial City" details recent restoration projects within the area of the old Imperial City.

Open: 9am - 4:30pm

Where: off the southern end of Nanchizi

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 8511 5114

One Million Yuan Compensation for Qing Tablet

By Zhang Huan

The owner of a car involved in a fatal collision that destroyed a 200-year-old stone tablet standing outside Shenyang's Palace Museum four years ago has been ordered to pay 1 million yuan in compensation and assume responsibility for repair of the priceless relic. The ruling was handed down by the Intermediate People's Court of Shenyang on June 18.

The stone tablet stood to the east of the palace, marking the place where in ancient times, visiting officials should dismount their horses out of respect for the emperor. It was erected in accordance with an imperial edict by Emperor Qianlong (1736 - 1796) of the Qing Dynasty, inscribed with the words "Officials inferior to princes should dismount here," in Manchu, Han,

Mongolian, Tibetan and Hui script.

The accident happened at about 2 am on June 21, 1999, when a speeding Mercedes Benz careened off the road and struck the tablet, killing the driver. Police later determined that the driver was at fault.

The Palace Museum of Shenyang subsequently sued the registered owner of the car, the Fu Man Lou restaurant, and its owner Yu Chengqi, claiming an indemnity of 27 million yuan, after experts in Liaoning Province determining the value of the stone tablet to be between 20 million and 30 million yuan.

The broken pieces of the stone tablet are now kept in the museum. The repaired tablet will be kept in the courtyard of the museum and a copy will be placed in the original location.



A copy of the stone tablet will be placed in the original location.

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So, China?

— Major Chinese contemporary art show unveiled at Pompidou Center

By Iris Miao / Xiao Hang
In 1974, having taken a three-week carefully guided tour of China, French semiotic theorist Roland Barthes described this country as “bland,” “flat” and “not colorful” in his book *Alors, le Chine?* Of course what he witnessed was China in the last throes of the Cultural Revolution, four years before the era of reform and opening was launched by Deng Xiaoping.

A new exhibition of contemporary Chinese art, which takes its name directly from that book and kicked off on Tuesday in Paris' Centre Pompidou, is aimed squarely at refuting Barthes' dated judgments and presenting the new face of a dynamic, opening China to the French people. It is the first collective Chinese contemporary art show to be held in this avant-garde center of Western modern art, built in the 1970s, and is the initial event in the China-France Culture Year program, which will run from October 2003 till July 2004 with the theme of “Ancient China, Colorful China, and Modern China”.

Fan Di'an, deputy dean of the Central Academy of Fine Arts and curator of the show, began preparations for the exhibition last year with his French counterparts Alfred Pacquement and Alain Sayag. Together, they visited over 200 artists from all over China, eventually inviting 47 to contribute 50 works to the event.

The prominent names involved and the nearly 10 million yuan in total expenses

make the four-month show “the largest and most profound in structure of any external exhibition of Chinese art in history,” according to Fan.

The 1,800 square meter exhibition hall has an open design and is filled with a range of paintings, sculptures,



Fan Di'an (right) oversees the show.

photographs, installation works, videos, movies, multimedia creations, and musical works by famed artists including Wang Guangyi, Fang Lijun, Liu Xiaodong, Song Dong, architects Zhang Yonghe and Wang Shu, film directors Zhang Yimou, Chen Kaige and Jia Zhangke, and musicians Guo Wenjing and Cui Jian.

“The profound reality of China's changing society and the development of traditional Chinese culture have enabled contemporary Chinese artists to do far more than simply copy

Western art,” said Fan Di'an. “It is not an exaggeration to say that contemporary Chinese art is qualified to engage in equal dialogue with the international art world regarding contemporary concepts.”

One main focus of the show is the issue of urbanization, echoing the planned theme of the China Pavilion in the Venice Biennale, which opened earlier this month. However, due to complications related to SARS, the official Chinese delegation for the China Pavilion is absent.

At the center of the



I Love Beijing by Lu Hao

Photos by Hang Cheng

exhibition is artist Lu Hao's immense model of the Chinese capital, titled *I Love Beijing*, which represents the disappearance of the ancient parts of the city. Down one side of the hall, a series of projectors show images of Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, while scattered video screens display clips from films portraying Chinese urban life.

Conspicuous space in the hall has also been given to three ancient treasures, a jade *cong* from the Neolithic Liangzhu culture (c.3,300-2,000 BC), a bronze mirror from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-24 AD), and a calligraphy work by Zhu Yunming, one of the “Four Masters” of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Fan explained the antique pieces, are intended to provide some background from which visitors can learn about distinctive Chinese symbols and thereby add some perspective to the modern works. Fan also pointed out that all the artists invited hail from the Chinese mainland, meaning they have “a relatively pure and unique perspective.”

Among the contemporary pieces on show is a 32-metre scroll of silk divided into hundreds of thousands of tiny

squares, all carefully painted in shades of gray by artist Lu Qing. Her stated aim in creating the piece was to absorb herself so completely in the monotony of her task that the only meaning was the act of painting itself.

Sweet Life by Shi Jinsong is made up of a series of sculptures of items such as computers, perfume bottles and toys, all crafted out of caramel. The sculptures are intended to represent the material desires of modern Chinese people, especially as they begin to melt and take on a grotesque feel.

The exhibition also includes the two films *In Public* by Jia Zhangke, and *Railways of Hope* by Ning Xing.

Finally, connection with Barthes' controversial quotes is drawn through the display of artifacts from the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976) owned by a French collector.

Chief French curator Alfred Pacquement said that Barthes' book *Alors, le Chine?* influenced French perception of China, and this exhibition will show audiences a “truer China” greatly changed from the troubled time of the Cultural Revolution.

The exhibition will run until Oct 13.

China-France Culture Year

Alors, le Chine? is the prelude to the two-year-long China-France Culture Year, which will officially run from October 2003 till July 2004. The program will include over 300 exhibitions, performances, and activities held in different parts of France covering art and literature, education, technology, radio and television, publishing, sports, nationalities, religion, architecture, environmental protection and tourism. Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing and Wuhan will each hold their own culture week activities in the cities of Paris, Marseilles, Lyons, Toulouse and Bordeaux. The French side of the program will be held all over China from the fall of 2004 to July 2005.

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All Star Night at Wangfujing



Zhang Xing, Gao Mingjun, Huang Weilin and Gu Juji

Photo by Lu Beifeng

By Dong Nan

Top Chinese pop stars including Aaron Kwok, Nicolas Tse, Gu Juji, Gao Mingjun, Han Hong and Sun Yue gave a performance titled *Yang Guang Zong Zai Feng Yu Hou (Sunlight always follows a storm)* at Wangfujing Sunday night.

The performance was a special feature for CCTV's music program *The Same Song*. The theme of the evening was, "To be a healthy and civilized Beijinger."

The stars invited heroes of the battle against SARS from all works of life onto the stage to sing along with them.

More than 5,000 fans braved a summer downpour, staying through till the end, at 11 pm.

Beethoven Fights against SARS

By Dong Nan

The China Philharmonic Orchestra gave a concert on Sunday at The Forbidden City Concert Hall as a part of its *Immortal Beethoven* series performance. It was the first classical music concert held in Beijing in the wake of the SARS epidemic.

The program included Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 in A Major and Violin Concerto in D Major.

The concert featured renowned American Chinese violinist Lin Zhaojiang, whose performance won enthusiastic applause.

"This period means a lot to everyone, just like the Beethoven music we play, which is full of deep thoughts of life itself," conductor Yu Long told the orchestra on June 18, the first day of rehearsals after the long suspension, "Let's say, immortal music, immortal Beethoven and immortal orchestra!"

The China Philharmonic will give two more concerts of Beethoven's music in the coming two weeks at The Forbidden City Concert Hall.



Lin Zhaojiang and Yu Long
Photo by Cun Jun



A-Mei Zhang

Brave New Album from A-Mei

By Dong Nan

Pop star A-Mei Zhang releases her new album *Bravery* today Asia-wide.

Since storming the music scene with her debut *Sisterhood* in 1996, A-Mei has maintained her popularity with a string of lyric love songs with a touch of Taiwan folk ballad. In her new work, she makes first-time forays into hip-hop and jazz.

According to some of the promotional material accompanying the new release, every song on the album is a potential hit, so much so that her company Warner has been unable to decide which track to release as the first single. The impasse was settled last week through a vote by fans, which chose the title song, *Bravery* at last.

As an added bonus for fans, A-Mei releases her screen debut, also named *Bravery*, today. The 30-minute film, directed by top Taiwan advertisement director, Deng Yongxing, tells a brief story about a country girl, played by A-Mei, and her struggle for career and love in Taipei.

Ugliness just Skin Deep

By Dong Nan

Photos of movie and TV soap star Vicki Zhao from her upcoming film *Pao Zhi Nu Peng You (Making My Girlfriend)* were released to the media last week.

In the photos, Zhao, best known for her beautiful and lovable characters in TV soaps, dresses as a dirty and not so pretty construction worker.

Making My Girlfriend is directed by Hong Kong director Ye Weimin. It is a light comedy about a young unsuccessful beautician (Ekin Cheng), who practices his skills on his girlfriend (Vicki Zhao).

Zhao played a homely girl in Stephen Chow's comedy *Shao Lin Zu Qiu (Shao Lin Soccer)*, but this is the first time for her to appear as such a blatantly ugly character. Her new look has become the highlight of the film and a focus of the media since filming began in March.

The movie is due to start screening in the middle of next month.



Vicki Zhao dresses as a construction worker
Photo by Photocome

WORLDWIDE



Ron Wood, Keith Richards and Mick Jagger from left

Rolling Stones to Rock SARS-Hit Toronto in July

The Rolling Stones vowed on Tuesday to "bring back the energy" to SARS-hit Toronto with an open-air concert next month for more than a third of a million people.

The Toronto area was the only place outside Asia where people died from SARS, and tourists, convention-goers and business people postponed travel to Canada's financial hub.

The city responded with an appeal to the Stones' promoter, a Torontonian, to bring the band to the city. (Reuters)



Adam Sandler and Jackie Titone

Adam Sandler Marries Model and Actress Girlfriend

Comedic actor Adam Sandler has gone from *Punch-Drunk Love* to holy matrimony.

The 36-year-old performer over the weekend married his longtime girlfriend, model and actress Jackie Titone, in a private ceremony, his publicist said on Monday.

The couple reportedly met in 1999, when she appeared in Sandler's film *Big Daddy* and in the Rob Schneider comedy *Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo*, which Sandler executive-produced. She also had a part in Sandler's horror comedy *Little Nicky*. (Reuters)



Sean Penn

L A Judge Rejects Extortion Claim Vs Sean Penn

Actor Sean Penn on Monday won the latest round in a court fight pitting him against mov-

ie producer Steve Bing when a Los Angeles judge tossed out part of Bing's \$15 million lawsuit against him.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Irving Feffer ruled that Bing cannot sue Penn for attempted civil extortion because the claim does not exist in California law. On a motion by Penn's attorney, Feffer threw out three other claims in Bing's suit but invited his attorney to revise and refile them.

The two men are suing each other over their failed collaboration on a yet-to-be-made film called *Why Men Shouldn't Marry*. Penn sued Bing for \$10 million, accusing the producer of firing him for vocally opposing the US-Iraq war.

(Reuters)

2 Fast 2 Furious Speeds to Top of UK Film Chart

Street-racing action movie *2 Fast 2 Furious* has left rivals trailing in its exhaust fumes to top the UK box office chart.

The sequel to the 2001 film *The Fast and the Furious*, raked in 2.75 million pounds in its opening weekend, *Screen International* said on Tuesday.

2 Fast shunted another sequel *The Matrix Reloaded*, starring Keanu Reeves as a futuristic hero fighting to save the world from robots, down to second spot after its four week dominance of the charts.

(Reuters)

Man Pleads Guilty in Bogus Bjork Show Case

A 25-year-old man accused of selling tickets to a nonexistent concert by Icelandic singer Bjork pleaded guilty to grand theft.

Aleso Conate, who pleaded Monday, is likely to receive probation and credit for time served when he's sentenced July 22.

Conate will be turned over to authorities from San Luis Obispo, where he was wanted on a warrant for violating probation and an elder abuse conviction, officials said. (AP)



Bjork

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By Hou Mingxin

Defending champion and top seed Lleyton Hewitt's loss in the opening round on Monday made a dramatic start to the 2003 Wimbledon Championships.

Croatian giant Ivo Karlovic rewrote Wimbledon history by beating the heavily favored Hewitt. The 2.08-meters-tall qualifier's victory a major shock and left last year's winner bearing the unwanted tag of being the first men's champion to stumble in the first round of the tournament since tennis turned professional in 1968.

Men's Winner Difficult to Predict

In the days when Pete Sampras was the king of tennis, the winner of Grand Slam events could be reliably chosen from a list of maybe three or four players.

This year, the American seven-time Wimbledon champion will not take the court. Other grass masters of the past will also be absent, with Patrick Rafter enjoying family life in Bermuda and Richard Krajicek and Goran Ivanisevic having quit the tournament.

Roger Federer is the only one of this year's top four seeds who can be considered



Third seed Justine Henin-Hardenne, the French Open champion, made it to the second round by beating Ukraine's Julia Vakulenko 2-0 on Tuesday. Xinhua Photo

Wimbledon Wide Open

a strong candidate for eventual victor, while four-time semi-finalist and home crowd favorite Tim Henman is down in the 10th spot after playing catch-up from shoulder surgery.

Andre Agassi, crushed in the second round last year by Thai Paradorn Srichaphan and overwhelmed at the recent Stella Artois Championships by Andy Roddick, will still start as many people's pick.

"He's fitter and stronger and probably just as fast as he was in his teenage years," Agassi's coach Darren Cahill told Reuters this week.

"He has a serious love of the game and you can't teach that," added the Australian coach for the 33-year-old Agassi, who won the title in 1992. "He enjoys going out and testing himself every day and seeing if he can become a better player."

Agassi's section of the draw includes unpredictable former US Open winner Marat Safin, while unseeded Mark Philippoussis is probably the most dangerous sleeper in the men's side of the tournament.

Other could-be winners include South

Africa's Wayne Ferreira, seeded 28, along with Srichaphan, American Taylor Dent, a number of Spaniards and South Americans, and, of course, Brits Henman and the fit-again Greg Rusedski.

Williams Sisters Face Belgian Challenge

They speak different languages and adopt different styles but Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin-Hardenne are united not only by a flag but by a common desire to thwart the mighty Williams sisters on the grand-slam stage.

Clijsters is seeded second for the grasscourt grand slam, in the bottom half of the draw with fourth seed Venus Williams, the elder of the two sisters.

The third seed Henin-Hardenne is in champion Serena's half. The machinations of the draw mean another all-Williams final is possible.

The Belgians smashed apart the phenomenal Williams stranglehold on the slams in Paris earlier this month when Henin-Hardenne beat Clijsters in the final of the French Open.

It marked the first grand slam final not contested by Americans Venus and Serena Williams for more than a year.

Henin-Hardenne's semi-final victory over Serena was the world number one's first defeat in a slam since she lost to Venus in the 2001 US Open final.

Jennifer Capriati is struggling to regain her form of two years ago, Lindsay Davenport still seems to be off the pace, Amelie Mauresmo is a little fragile mentally and Daniela Hantuchova appears too physically frail.

The title will likely go to one of the top four but which one is anybody's guess.



Defending champion and top seed Lleyton Hewitt stumbled in the opening round on Monday. Xinhua Photo

Brazil out, France in for Confederation Cup

By Hou Mingxin

At the 2003 FIFA Confederation Cup currently being held in France, eight national soccer teams - seven regional champions plus reigning World Cup champion Brazil - have been sparring for the right to claim the inter-continental crown.

The smoke first cleared on Tuesday with the end of preliminary group matches. In Group A, defending Confederation Cup champion France and South American Cup winners Colombia have entered the semi-finals, scheduled to kick off today. The semi-finalists from Group B are Turkey and African champion Cameroon.

After first losing to Cameroon, Brazil was knocked out of the competition on Tuesday after a 2-2 tie with Turkey.

The tournament is the first opportunity for hosts France to show the world they are back in good form after their disappointing showing at last year's World Cup. Their first round exit without a single goal in that tournament was nothing short of humiliating for the 1998 champions.

France, however, is expected to have its hands full today when the team faces Turkey, which had a far stronger World Cup showing, earning third place. Anticipation runs high for this exciting all-European match.

The final match is scheduled for Monday, and should prove to be an interesting intercontinental match regardless of who is involved.

Since the inaugural FIFA Confederations Cup of 1997, each edition of the tournament has seen a different confederation emerge triumphant - in 1997 it was Brazil for the Confederation of South American Football, in 1999 it was Mexico for Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football, and the 2001 tournament saw UEFA, through the French team, crowned as the continental champion.

TEAMS	
Group A	Group B
Colombia	Brazil
France	Cameroon
Japan	Turkey
New Zealand	United States



French forward Sylvain Wiltord (white) vies with New Zealand's Noah Hickey in the group match of the Confederation Cup last Sunday at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis near Paris. Xinhua/AP

Bull's Williams Set to Miss Season Following Crash

Edited by Hou Mingxin

Jay Williams, who suffered a broken pelvis and knee injuries in a motorcycle crash last week, will likely miss the entire 2003-2004 NBA season, the Chicago Bulls announced on Tuesday.

The guard's injuries are so severe that the team may be able to get a salary cap exemption for this coming season.

However, the Bulls would not comment further on the injury or the prognosis for William's long-term rehabilitation, citing federal privacy laws.

Williams, the number-two pick in the 2002 NBA draft, remains in intensive care at Advocate Illinois Masonic Hospital and is expected to need more surgery.

The 21-year-old was riding a new sports bike last Thursday afternoon, when he slammed into a pole on Chicago's north side and sustained extensive injuries to his left leg. He underwent surgery that night.

"When we think about him we think in terms of this young man who is 21 that made a mistake in terms of judgment, but that's not the issue," John Paxson, Bulls general manager, told Reuters Tuesday.

"The issue is him getting better and that's all we're focused on as an organization," he added.

Williams had a somewhat disappointing regular season last year and was the subject of trade rumors, as the Bulls also have Jamal Crawford at point guard.

With today marking the 2003 NBA draft, there will be no trade involving Williams in the immediate future because of his injury. (Source: Reuters)

Top seeds	
(source: www.wimbledon.org)	
Gentlemen's Singles	
1	Lleyton HEWITT (AUS)
2	Andre AGASSI (USA)
3	Juan Carlos FERRERO (ESP)
4	Roger FEDERER (SUI)
5	Roger FEDERER (SUI)
6	Andy RODDICK (USA)
7	David NALBANDIAN (ARG)
8	Guillermo CORIA (ARG)
9	Sjeng SCHALKEN (NED)
10	Tim HENMAN (GBR)
Ladies' Singles	
1	Serena WILLIAMS (USA)
2	Kim CLIJSTERS (BEL)
3	Justine HENIN-HARDENNE (BEL)
4	Venus WILLIAMS (USA)
5	Lindsay DAVENPORT (USA)
6	Amelie MAURESMO (FRA)
7	Chanda RUBIN (USA)
8	Jennifer CAPRIATI (USA)
9	Daniela HANTUCHOVA (SVK)
10	Anastasia MYSKINA (RUS)

Prize money (In pounds sterling)		
(source: www.wimbledon.org)		
Singles	Men	Women
Winner	575,000	535,000
Runner-up	287,500	267,500
Semi-Finalists	143,750	129,350
Quarter-Finalists	74,750	65,400
Losers of the Fourth Round	40,250	34,200
Losers of the Third Round	23,280	18,620
Losers of the Second Round	14,090	11,270
Losers of the First Round	8,630	6,900

Championships Schedule (source: www.wimbledon.org)			
The provisional schedule of matches for the Championships (please note that this is subject to weather delays):			
Fri 27 June	Ladies' & Men's Singles Third Round	Thu 3 July	Ladies' Singles Semi-Finals / Men's Doubles
Sat 28 June	Ladies' & Men's Singles Third Round		Semi-Finals / Ladies' Doubles Semi-Finals
Mon 30 June	Ladies' & Men's Singles Fourth Round	Fri 4 July	Men's Singles Semi-Finals
Tue 1 July	Ladies' Singles Quarter-Finals	Sat 5 July	Ladies' Singles Final / Men's Doubles Final
Wed 2 July	Men's Singles Quarter-Finals	Sun 6 July	Men's Singles Final / Ladies' Doubles Final



Real Win 29th League Title

By Hou Mingxin

Real Madrid clinched their 29th league title on Sunday as two goals from superstar Ronaldo and a thunderous Roberto Carlos free kick earned them a 3-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

On a nerve-jangling final night of a long Spanish league season, Real Madrid's victory kept them two points clear of Real Sociedad, who had to settle for second spot despite a 3-0 win at home to Atletico Madrid.

In a repetition of the finale to the 1979-80 season, Real went into their last match needing a victory over Athletic Bilbao to clinch the title ahead of Sociedad.

History duly repeated itself as they beat Bilbao at the Bernabeu, meaning Sociedad's win was not quite good enough to give them what would have been a third league title.

Ronaldo once again demonstrated that he is the best in the world when it comes to the big occasion as he almost

single-handedly guided Real Madrid to victory.

It was a first domestic league title for Ronaldo, who scored 34 league goals for Barcelona in the 1996-97 season but with whom had to settle for the runner-up spot behind Real in the league.

Real Madrid's win is yet another triumph for unassuming coach Vicente del Bosque, who has led the team to two league titles and two European Cups since he took charge of the club in November 1999.

Roberto Carlos (left 1), Zidane (left 3) and Figo (right) congratulate teammate Ronaldo's goal in the Sunday's match, in which Real Madrid beat Athletic Bilbao and won the team's 29th league title. Xinhua Photo

By James Liu

Beijingers have long loved eating outdoors in the summer, but this year, in the wake of SARS, open-air dining has to be bigger than ever. The municipal government has allowed an unprecedented number of restaurants to set up outside tables and serve diners, whether it's in picturesque areas or on the side of the Third Ring Road.

While the surging numbers of al fresco dining choices is encouraging, most are similar, offering family style Chinese dishes along with summer favorites such as *maodou*, spicy boiled edamame, or *maxiao*, the nearly ubiquitous spicy crawfish first popularized around Ghost Street. So where can you go to get something a little more luxurious, or at least a little different, when enjoying the luxury of eating outside?

FLO – Authentic French Fare

The French catering group FLO is planning to open a series of small shops offering take-away delicacies around the city. In the meantime, the FLO restaurant in Beijing will celebrate its fourth birthday in September and in the past few weeks has become one of the city's top spots for open-air indulgence when the wraps came off its terrace on June 16. What that terrace lacks in a view, as it faces the Third Ring Road, it more than makes up for in comfort and quality of food and service.

Overall, the restaurant is divided into eight sections with ample seating inside and out.



Photos by Wang Yong

Cooking Chinese at Home Salt-Baked Shrimp

This shrimp dish, which hails from southern China, is deceptive, as it is neither baked nor otherwise cooked in a lot of salt. The name is a left-over from the historic popularity of salt-baked chicken, which led to many foods being called "salt baked" even though they are not baked nor particularly salty.

In actuality, these shrimp are first blanched and then quick-fried in oil, bringing out their natural sweetness and giving them a rich, crispy texture.

Ingredients:

1/2 pound medium-large shrimp (about 12), feelers removed and deveined, shells kept on; 1/2 tsp baking soda; 3 cups water; 1 tbsp plus 1/2 tsp salt; 2 tbsp cornstarch; 4 cups peanut oil; 1 tbsp minced fresh chilies

Procedure:

Place the shrimp and baking soda in a bowl, and mix well to coat. Allow shrimp to rest for at least 20 minutes.

Place the water and one tablespoon salt in a pot, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the shrimp, and water-blanch for 10 seconds. Remove the shrimp with a strainer, and run cold water over them to cool. Blanching in water is intended to draw out the internal liquid within the shrimp.

Place the shrimp in a dish, sprinkle with cornstarch to coat them lightly, and shake off excess starch. Heat a wok over high heat for one minute, add the peanut oil, and heat to 350 degrees. Place the shrimp in a Chinese strainer, lower into the oil, and fry for one minute. Turn off the heat, remove shrimp with the strainer, and drain. Transfer the oil from the wok to a bowl.

Return one tablespoon of the reserved oil to the wok, and heat over high heat for 20 seconds. Add the remaining half-teaspoon salt and the chilies, and cook, stirring for 45 seconds. Add the shrimp, and cook, stirring, making certain the shrimp are well coated, for one minute. They should be dry and crusted. Turn off the heat, transfer shrimp to a heated platter and serve.

The walls are decorated with posters of entertainment venues from France of the 1950's, as well as works by some contemporary Chinese artists.

Artistic inspiration is clear in the creations of the impressive kitchen. Executive chef Adrien Alexandre is a highly-trained French master and his staff all hold upper-crust certification.

Sparing no expense, quality of ingredients is a top priority, with oysters and prawns imported from Brittany, a wine list representing the best of France, California and other top grape growing regions, and a humidor stocked with elegant cigars, such as Romeo Y Juliet, Davidoff-special R and Punch-Churchills, at reasonable prices.

Among the specialties of the house are starters homemade goose liver terrine with plum jam (78 yuan) and snails Burgundy-style (58 yuan) to be followed by Le plateau prestige, which includes six huitres Claires, crevettes roses, six small oysters, shrimps, one local crab, and one Dublin Bay prawn (418 yuan). Why end a meal there when the restaurant

also offers delicious deserts such as crepes with chocolate sauce (46 yuan) and vanilla crème brûlée" (46 yuan)?

Everyday, FLO also offers prix-fixed set menus for lunch (68 and 98 yuan) and one for dinner (158 yuan). The popularity of this restaurant speaks of its quality, and it is undoubtedly one of the top places to dine under the sun or stars this summer.

Add: Second floor, Rainbow Plaza, 16 Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang **Open:** 11:30 am – 3 pm, 6-11 pm **Tel:** 6595 5139 **Average cost:** 250 yuan per person



Jam House

For whatever reason, Jam House's Chinese name, Jiemofang, translates directly to mustard kitchen. While there probably is no actual mustard on the premises, there is plenty to spice up an evening, starting with the bar's expansive roof-top seating area.

The bar's large al fresco space can seat around 100, and while decoration is very simple, with plastic tables and chairs, it is equipped with a functioning bar that can serve cocktails as well as draft beers, including summer favorite Hoegaarden. To go with the drinks, the kitchen offers over 20 kinds of freshly baked pizzas, as well as other specials such as roast lamb.

The pizza is the highlight, cooked over real fruit wood to be crisp, smoky and tasty. The bar is equipped with a pizza oven, perhaps necessitated by nearby competition, that cranks out impressive pizza reasonably priced from 45 yuan to 65 yuan per pie.

Yet another features that keeps customers coming back is the music. On weekends, a live band led by Xinjiang-born pop star Arken plays their own style

of flamenco music, with space open for customers to dance and sufficient acoustics to ensure all customers can enjoy the show.

Add: Sanlitun Nanjie, Chaoyang **Open:** 5pm – 2 am **Tel:** 6506 3843 **Average cost:** 50 yuan per person

Italian Al Fresco

By Joel Kirkhart

A couple years ago, it used to be that Sanlitun was the place to eat and drink outside in this city. The waning popularity of that street, however, does not mean that it is not a good choice for enjoying food in the open air. Thanks to a few excellent Western restaurants, with Mediterraneo topping the list, fine food and drink are still ready and waiting on the tree-lined street.

A secret to Mediterraneo's years of success must be its nice street-side patio seating. These days is an especially pleasant time to eat there, as gusts of wind blow down light showers of yellow flowers from the trees canopied above, while expansive umbrellas shield diners from any real rain.

The restaurant specializes in Italian fare, with some Spanish and other southern European influence. The large menu starts with a decent selection of appetizers, including classics such as bruschetta, beef carpaccio and a tapas sampler plate, along with a range of salads, most of which go for around 50 yuan, and some soups. The gazpacho (38 yuan) has a nice complex, acidic flavor and is surprisingly smooth, though you can give it some needed crunch by adding the accompanying serving of finely minced onion, pepper and tomato.

Another good summer starter is the tomato and mozzarella terrine with baby lettuce and basil oil (43 yuan), a classy take on a classic appetizer. The terrine is presented in two beautiful slices of layered cheese and tomato, although being pressed into a terrine makes both a bit firm.

For entrees, Mediterraneo has a selection of tempting pastas, such as squid ink amori in light seafood sauce with asparagus (58 yuan), as well as several meat and seafood options for hungrier diners. The highest priced item is grilled king prawns with tagliolini (125 yuan), a beautiful plate of three huge prawns well-grilled with a pronounced smoke flavor that nicely contrasts their natural sweet notes. Under the prawns

is a portion of tasty pasta in a simple but delicious butter-garlic sauce.

Another good seafood choice is the monkfish medallions with roasted fennel and caper-lemon sauce (93 yuan). While it has become a staple of menus in fashionable restaurants in New York and many other cities, monkfish is hard to come by in Beijing. Here, it is presented in three meaty pieces on the bone, nicely cooked without any loud accompaniment that allows its buttery, lobster-like flavor to shine. The fish is served atop a mound of roasted vegetables, the highlight being the fragrant, tender fennel, for which the tart sauce acts as a solid foil.

The wine menu offers many Italian and Spanish choices, with several by the glass, and don't pass on desert. The roasted mango salad with yogurt ice cream and pistachios (38 yuan) is decent, but the cheesecake with cherry compote is a real winner, a large slab of dense, mildly-sweet cheesecake topped with a scattering of fruit.

Traffic noise along Sanlitun detracts from the charm of eating outside at Mediterraneo, as does being bathed in light from the neon sign belonging to the 24-hour supermarket next door (at least the sign is the right colors for dining Italian-style). The management would also be smart to offer some form of protection from hungry mosquitoes. However, the delicious, beautifully-presented food more than makes up for those minor annoyances, making Mediterraneo one of the top choices for elegant outdoor dining in this city.

Add: Building 8, 1 A North Sanlitun Street, Chaoyang **Open:** 12 am – 11:30 pm **Tel:** 6415 3691 **Average cost:** 175 yuan per person and up



La Terrasse

Several hotel restaurants around town have done their best to move outdoors to take advantage of summer demand, among them the newly opened La Terrasse at the Novotel Xinqiao.

The outdoor eatery offers over 80 varieties of Western



and Chinese style snacks and dishes, including French, Italian and Russian treats. Prices are remarkably reasonable, ranging from just 2 to 20 yuan. All food is intended to provide good company to the beer selection, priced incredibly low during a current promotion at just 5 yuan for three draft beers. Other beverages, such as cola and bottled ice tea, cost from 6 to 8 yuan, again very competitive compared to even far less luxurious establishments.

To complete the relaxing mood, management provides chess sets and cards for customers. All prices quoted above include service charge.

Add: West side of Novotel Xinqiao Hotel **Open:** 11 am – 10 pm **Tel:** 6513 3366 ext. 2001 / 2002 **Average cost:** 50 yuan per person

Tianlun Plaza

The Tianlun Plaza on the third floor of the Tianlun Dynasty hotel claims to have the largest outdoor dining space in Beijing and is offering a no-service-charge promotion until August 31.

Every evening, the hotel's chefs take their places at stations offering barbecue and Indian *paobing*, roti-like fried pancakes. While the pancakes are relatively inexpensive, 18 yuan for the tomato, seafood and dace fish filled version and 16 yuan for the rest, the grilled options are high priced, with steak going for 85 yuan and four grilled shrimp fetching 120 yuan.

Unlike most other hotel restaurants, the Tianlun Plaza is offering a line of traditional snack foods this summer. *Fuling* cakes, white wood ear with sugar, bean curd with almond and iced glossy ganoderma in sugar soup sell for 20 yuan each.

The plaza also serves afternoon tea, offering a dozen Chinese and English teas, along with deserts and sandwiches, available for 58 yuan per person from 3 pm to 5 pm everyday.

Add: 50 Wangfujing Avenue **Open:** 10 am – 11 pm **Tel:** 6513 8888 ext. 8898 **Average cost:** within 200 yuan per person



Parties



Dancing Queen

The party features disco music popular in the US during the 70s and 80s. Dress up and get on down to the grooves with Beijing's hottest DJs, like Weng Weng. Best dressed 70s and 80s guys and girls get the chance to win a bottle of champagne.

Where: Yan Club, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** June 28, 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8457 3506

Latinos Night

Free Salsa lessons and free Latin party till late with DJ Coco Loco. CD Café will provide wooden dance-floors and outside seating.

Where: CD Café **When:** Thursday, 8 pm **Tel:** 6501 8877 ext 3032

Exhibitions



Love' right by Xu Sa

Xu Sa Oil Painting Solo Exhibition

Xu Sa graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1984 and has since taken part in a number of exhibitions. Her paintings depict the problems in society since the opening up and reform policy began in China.

Where: Fa Fa Gallery, 2 Xiangjiang Beilu, Jingshun Lu, Quanfa Garden Clubhouse, Chaoyang **When:** July 1-30, 9 am - 10 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 13001908730

Feed Your Mind

Delicacy can be a lifestyle and an aesthetic experience as well,

says curator Huang Du, who invites six artists to implement his idea of artistic practice in an unfamiliar and strange space rather than an exhibition hall. You can enjoy the food too.

When: June 27 - July 17 **Where:** Rita Italian Restaurant, No.3 Dongdan, Beidajie **Tel:** 6512 3629

Modern Oil Painting Exhibition

Featuring oil paintings by Luan Xiaojie, Jiang Tianyu and Li Qiang. Luan Xiaojie's "Big Boy Series" is humorous but expresses profound loneliness. It reveals the isolation, loneliness, and narcissism in the rapid development of society. Li Qiang and Jiang Tianyu's oil paintings are based on a young person's life and love in the city.

Where: Qin Gallery, Huaweili Enjoy Paradise 1-1E (north of Beijing Curio City) Chaoyang **When:** June 20-30, 9:30 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461



Girl by Jiang Tianyu

Sports

Secret Valley

So called because the valley is not visible unless you climb up the mountains around it. This walk is rich in dramatic rocks and riverbeds, fruit trees and history. The valley was once home to a number of monks. There are two old ruined buildings here.

There are two caves. The first one does not go too deep but it was once inhabited by monks who built onto the front of it. That was when the valley was not so dry and a stream gurgled outside the cave. The second one (Sunny Cave) is further up the hill and is quite deep. A stele stands near the entrance and just inside there sits a headless Buddha.

Where: Chang Ping, northeast of Beijing **When:** July 2, meet 8:30 am outside Starbucks, return 5 pm **How much:** adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

Lectures

China's Social Structure

Yang Yin, social researcher from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, will discuss the dynamic

changes in the social structure of China over the last 25 years. English translation provided

Where: Lee's Antique Carpets, Liangmaqiao Lu, close to 21st Century Hotel **When:** June 28, 2:30-4:30 pm **Admission:** adults 40 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 8462 2081

Massage and acupressure therapies

On Sunday afternoon, a Chinese doctor will demonstrate and explain traditional medical treatments like skin scraping, hot bottles, and other acupressure treatments which aim to balance the inner heat and coldness of the human body. Some basic massage skills will also be taught. English translation provided.

For more information, call 13051299897

Music

Beethoven

Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 is performed by the China Philharmonic Orchestra.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** June 29, 7 pm **Admission:** 50-380 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

Erhu Music

San Wei presents a folk music concert featuring professional folk musicians Zhou Yaokun, Lin Jiaqing, Tian Weining, Li Zengguang and Yang Xi. The programs include Erhu solo *Reflection of the Moon over Two Springs* (Erquan yingyue), *Horse Racing* (Sai Ma) and others.

Where: Sanwei Bookstore, 26 Fuxingmennei Dajie **When:** Friday **Tel:** 6601 3204

Activities



Garden Gathering

On weekends, this activity will be held at the Summer Palace. All the lights will be on, and some teahouses will be open and offering music performances. You can enjoy the scenery in the evening by boat.

Where: Summer Palace **When:** Friday-Sunday, 6-9:30 pm **Tel:** 6288 1610

Suburban Motel

New Seed Theatre will premiere *Suburban Motel* by George F. Walker, one of Canada's most acclaimed and controversial authors. By turns hilarious, heart-breaking, and shocking, the play addresses and questions ideas of morality, security and love.

Where: CD Cafe **When:** June 27, 7 pm **Admission:** 60 yuan **Tel:** 6284 1081, 13520655442 **Email:** newseedtheatre@yahoo.com



The Core

Directed by Jon Amiel, starring Aaron Eckhart, Hilary Swank, Bruce Greenwood. Geophysicist Dr. Josh Keyes discovers that an unknown force has caused the Earth's inner core to stop rotating. With the planet's magnetic field rapidly deteriorating, the earth's atmosphere starts to come apart at the seams with catastrophic consequences. To resolve the

crisis, Keyes, along with a team of the world's most gifted scientists, travel into the Earth's core in a subterranean craft piloted by "terranauts," Major Rebecca "Beck" Childs and Colonel Robert Iverson (Bruce Greenwood). Their mission: detonate a device that will reactivate the core. In English.

Where: Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng, 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian **Admission:** 40-50 yuan **When:** June 27-July 27 **Tel:** 6261 2851

Jams

Lucky Bar

Tonight Reflector (*Fanguangjing*) will perform. Tomorrow the band CMCB and Toy will on stage.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** June 27-28, 9:30 pm **Admission:** 30-20 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109

EleKtrobeat Back

The entire EleKtrobeat crew is back in town, spinning quality tunes, featuring DJs Slab and Usami. Breaks, house and techno. The Club's monthly promotion includes free drinks from 10pm.

Where: The Club **When:** Friday, 10 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6416 1077

Language Exchange

A 24-year-old Beijing girl, working at a foreign language school, wants to find a native English speaker for language exchange.

Email: sally4242001@sohu.com

During the summer holidays, Wang Ting, a university student, wants to find a native English speaker for language exchange.

Tel: 13671069499

Calm, an employee of a tax agency, wants to find a native English speaker for language exchange.

Email: mwb77@sina.com

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayin@ynet.com or call 6590 2522

By Guo Yuandan

Movies



Shower (Xi Zao)

Directed by Zhang Yang, starring Pu Cunxin, Jiang Wu, Zhu Xu. Hidden in one of Beijing's hutongs, a bathhouse acts as a home-away-from-home for a group of mostly older men who pass the days drinking tea, playing chess or gambling when they're not soaking in the big tiled tubs. Into this old-world oasis walks the owner's oldest son who left home years ago to make big money. He can no longer relate to this world, including his younger brother, who is mentally handicapped and helps out in the bathhouse. In Chinese with English subtitles.

Where: Fountain Terrace, Hilton Hotel Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Beilu **When:** June 27-28, 8:30 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan, includes a beer/non-alcoholic drink **Tel:** 6430 1398



Dancer in the Dark

Directed by Lars von Trier, starring Bjork, Catherine Deneuve, David Morse and Peter Stormare. Selma immigrates to the States in 1964 and must work like a dog because her son needs an expensive operation or he'll go blind. Adding to her woes, Selma suffers from the same sight-stealing disease. In English with Chinese subtitles.

Where: Space for Imagination, 5 Xiawangzhuang Haidian **When:** June 28, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

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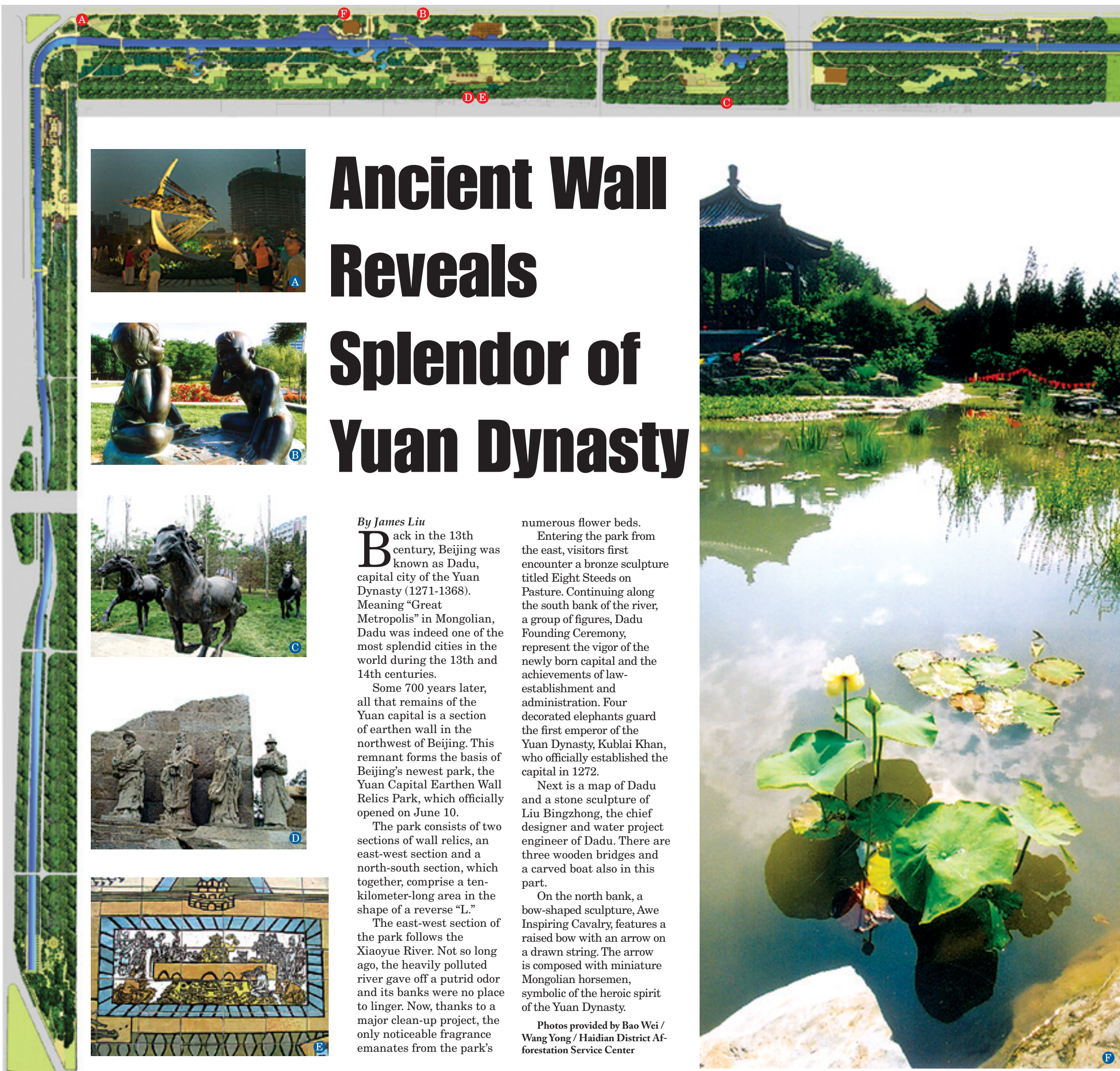
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Ancient Wall Reveals Splendor of Yuan Dynasty

By James Liu

Back in the 13th century, Beijing was known as Dadu, capital city of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Meaning "Great Metropolis" in Mongolian, Dadu was indeed one of the most splendid cities in the world during the 13th and 14th centuries.

Some 700 years later, all that remains of the Yuan capital is a section of earthen wall in the northwest of Beijing. This remnant forms the basis of Beijing's newest park, the Yuan Capital Earthen Wall Relics Park, which officially opened on June 10.

The park consists of two sections of wall relics, an east-west section and a north-south section, which together, comprise a ten-kilometer-long area in the shape of a reverse "L."

The east-west section of the park follows the Xiaoyue River. Not so long ago, the heavily polluted river gave off a putrid odor and its banks were no place to linger. Now, thanks to a major clean-up project, the only noticeable fragrance emanates from the park's

numerous flower beds.

Entering the park from the east, visitors first encounter a bronze sculpture titled Eight Steeds on Pasture. Continuing along the south bank of the river, a group of figures, Dadu Founding Ceremony, represent the vigor of the newly born capital and the achievements of law-establishment and administration. Four decorated elephants guard the first emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, Kublai Khan, who officially established the capital in 1272.

Next is a map of Dadu and a stone sculpture of Liu Bingzhong, the chief designer and water project engineer of Dadu. There are three wooden bridges and a carved boat also in this part.

On the north bank, a bow-shaped sculpture, Awe Inspiring Cavalry, features a raised bow with an arrow on a drawn string. The arrow is composed with miniature Mongolian horsemen, symbolic of the heroic spirit of the Yuan Dynasty.

Photos provided by Bao Wei / Wang Yong / Haidian District Afforestation Service Center

MUSEUM WATCH

Beijing Museum of Stone Inscription Art

By Guo Yuandan

Beijing Stone Inscription Art Museum is in the Five-Pagoda Temple (Wutasi), 200 meters north of Beijing Zoo.

Also known as Zhenjue Temple, Five Pagoda Temple is named for the five pagodas that once stood inside the temple.

The temple was built during the reign of Emperor Yongle (1403-1424) of the Ming Dynasty, modeled on an Indian Buddhist temple. In 1473 the Diamond Throne pagoda was constructed in the temple. During the Qing Dynasty, virtually all of the temple was destroyed by fire, only the Diamond Throne pagoda survived.

The foundation is 17 meters high and the five pagodas rise from this base. The entire structure is made of white marble, which after over 500 years, shows a pale orange cast. The four sides of the foundation are carved with rows of Buddhas as well as bas-reliefs of Buddhist symbols, floral designs and Sanskrit letters.

The five pagodas are also covered with similar carvings on a lesser scale. A pair of feet can be seen on the pagoda, the size of a man. Called "Buddhist Feet", they are said to express the Buddha

Sakyamuni's will that Buddhist scripture shall be preserved for centuries to come.

The stone carvings are arranged on all four sides of the pagoda, and are divided into eight sections, including tablets of merits and virtues, epitaphs, calligraphy and stone carvings.

In the comprehensive stone inscription area, on the eastern side of the pagoda, there are two huge carved tables made for emperors Qianlong and Shunzhi of the Qing Dynasty.

In the north of pagoda, the 12 tablets of merits and virtues applaud famous officials and nobility of the Ming and Qing dynasties for their good deeds and upright behavior.

In the epitaph section, there are 105 inscriptions on tombstones from the Tang to the Qing dynasties carved for imperial family members and high officials.

There are also over 67 tablets for temples and guildhalls bearing inscriptions from provincial, industrial and commercial associations.

Where: Xizhimenwai, Haidian
Open: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm **Admission:** 10 yuan **Tel:** 6217 2894

Photos by Cui Hao



Digong Baozuo



Jingang Baozuo

A Holiday in the Green Hills

By Charles Zhu

A weekend repose at the Fragrant Hills, a royal garden of the Qing court, five kilometers west of the Summer Palace, is a perfect antidote to the urban sound and fury and forests of cement towers.

The hotel, a cluster of nine villas and a main red-roofed building of 311 bedrooms, nestles at the southeast foot of the Fragrant Hills.

I used to stay at the Fragrant Hills Hotel, about 500 meters higher up the hill, which opened in the 1980s and is getting quite old. If you say that the Fragrant Hills Hotel designed by I.M. Pei, the world-renowned architect, is like an elegant lass of southern China with its whitewashed walls, black roof tiles and an exquisite garden of rocky formations and ponds, the Golden Resources is like a gaudy freewheeling urban girl with its raucously colored marble floors and lobby ceilings and eye-catching flowery patterns everywhere.

From the hotel to the gate of the park, the hillside street is thronged with holiday mountain climbers and busy with business. In addition to the red maple leaf souvenirs, the street vendors, mostly migrants from south China, sell shepherd's purse, a wild vegetable picked by themselves in the wild.

If you have an interest in modern Chinese history, you may visit Shuangqing Villa (双清别墅), which comprises of a courtyard, a garden, a pond and a group of black-tiled flat houses. This is where Mao Zedong stayed before the Commu-

nist forces entered Beijing, and where he directed the decisive battle to cross the Yangtze River and capture Nanjing, the capital of the KMT regime.

It is a walk of about 20 minutes from the hotel to the Beijing Botanical Garden, where everything in nature struggles to grow. The garden is renowned for its hothouse where tropical plant life thrives. Entrance is 50 yuan, fairly expensive for the average Chinese.

Behind the garden stands a Buddhist temple that houses a sleeping bronze Buddha who ever smiles, a symbol of optimism and grandeur of mind, and a mountain gully, the Cherry Gully (樱桃沟), known for its towering lacebark pines.

Commanding the view is a hill, on the top of which tower two rock pillboxes in formation, the legacy of the war between the Communist forces and KMT in the late 1940s. The pillboxes were built by General Fu Zuoyi's forces, the garrison of Beijing, that finally surrendered without fighting.

On the northern slopes of the Fragrant Hills is Zhao Miao (昭庙), a Tibetan Buddhist temple built in 1784, during the reign of Emperor Qianlong, to accommodate the Panchen Lama from Tibet. A white marble gate tower covered with green glazed tiles stands to the west and a rainbow bridge flies over a pond in front of the temple. There is a stone stele inscribed with ethnic Han, Mongolian, Tibetan and Manchurian languages, a mystery enough for you to explore.